M. A. P. THE BEST SOCIETY PAPER. EVERY WEEK, 1d.

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 529. FOR WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 18TH, 1899. [ONE PENNY.

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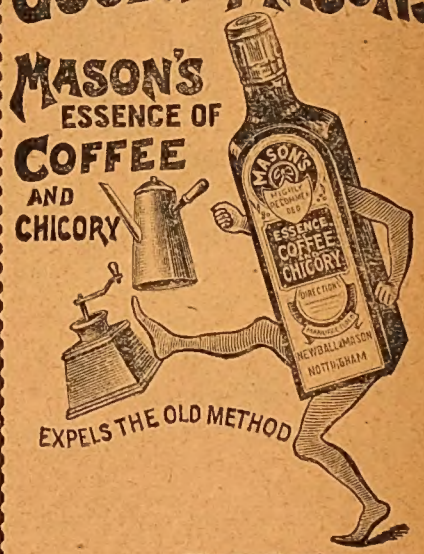

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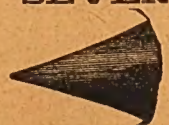

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SHORT STORIES

No. 529.
One Penny.

For the Week ending
February 18th, 1899.

A TRAMP FOR A WIFE.

I HAD this story from a dear friend who told it to me one day when we were talking of the accidents of life—more astonishing and romantic a hundred times than the inventions of fiction. He had seen this little drama enacted under his eyes, and had known the actors in it.

"My father lived in High Street. I can still see his house with its slate roof and its jutting beams, a hospitable house if ever there was one. Poor people know how good it was to stay there; they never went away empty-handed.

"We were seated one evening by the fireside, my father smoking his pipe and gazing into the sparkling ashes on the hearth, my mother ironing the family linen, I reading, when suddenly outside, near the street door, a great noise was heard, and we saw a lad with a face of terror, enter hurriedly.

"'What is the matter?'

"'A soldier has fallen at your door—overcome by fatigue,' answered the lad.

"My father loved soldiers. He sprang from his seat and rushed out of doors, and before I had taken half a dozen steps to follow him he was returning with a young soldier so well supported that my father was carrying him like a sack of corn.

"My mother hastened to wheel a big armchair near to the fire, and the young man was assisted to sit down in it or rather he was laid down in it and my father, looking at him pitifully, said:

"'Is it possible you can be tramping the roads in such a condition?'

"The young soldier was indeed very pale and thin, his hair glued to his forehead with perspiration, the veins on his temples swollen, his face begrimed with the dust of the highway.

Edited
By
C. Arthur Pearson

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"He must have had a long walk; his shoes were worn out, the leather cut to pieces with sharp stones as we could see. The upper leather of the left shoe had been torn from the sole and the foot within was bleeding.

"My father was on his knees before the poor fellow, pulling, cutting, tearing off the fragments of the boots. The young soldier's feet were terribly swollen and blistered. My father dipped his handkerchief in vinegar, washed and dressed the wounds.

"The soldier had by this time come to himself. He looked at us—at my father, mother, me, and two or three neighbours who had by that time arrived. We could see that he was trying to comprehend what was taking place about him.

"Then he raised himself, resting on the arm of the chair, and said to my father in broken accents:

"'But, monsieur—you—you—do not know me!'

"'We'll make each other's acquaintance at table, then,' said my father smiling.

"We had already dined but my father wished to keep the soldier company. He placed himself at the table facing the young man, and examined the regimental buttons of his tunic. The soldier ate with great appetite, helped by my mother, my father filling the glasses which did not rest long empty.

"'So,' he said suddenly pointing to the tin tube box which hung suspended by a cord to the young soldier's neck, 'you have served your time since you have got your discharge. But what in the name of misfortune are you doing—trying to kill yourself on the roads? I see how it is—you haven't any money to pay for a place on the coach?'

"'I,' said the soldier, 'I have been paid my discharge money and my mother would have sent me more than enough to pay my fare if I had wanted it; but—well I couldn't ride.'

"'I understand,' replied my father, who did not in the least comprehend the meaning of what the soldier had said. He called for another bottle.

"The meal ended, the soldier tried to walk; but he staggered on his feet, uttered a stifled cry and fell back into the chair. I saw tears start to his eyes. He was a young man, thin, wiry, dark-complexioned and nervous, with a look of energy in his face—not a man to weep at trifles. Those tears in his eyes puzzled me.

"'I shall not be able to walk before to-morrow!' he cried in a tone in which anger was mixed with mortification.

"'Walk!' exclaimed my mother in alarm.

"'Continue your tramp!' cried my father.

The soldier shook his head.

"'You do not know,' he said, 'I must do it!'

"I saw my father look intently into the young man's face, with a dumb, questioning gaze.

"'I'll tell you all about it,' said the soldier, 'for you have perhaps saved my life, and I owe it to you to tell you who I am.

"'My name is Jean Chevaucheux and my father is a lathe-splitter at Mezieres—an honest man resembling you, monsieur. Seven years ago, when I was drawn for the conscription, I was wildly in love with Marguerite Servan—a girl as good as she was pretty. I had already asked for her hand and her father had not said me nay; but at the same time as myself Pierre Puvioux had asked to be her husband.

"'Pierre is about my own age, a good fellow who carries his heart in his hand, as the saying is. I ought to have detested him, but he remained my friend. Judge for yourself!

"'Old Servan held out his hand to me, and said:

"'"You are worthy to become my son-in-law; but you must get Marguerite's consent."

"'When the question was put to her, Marguerite said she would willingly have me for her husband; but she said exactly the same in regard to Puvioux. She loved one as well as the other and could not decide which of us to select.

"'One evening Servan took Pierre and myself by the arm and led us to a public-house, and then said while we emptied a bottle of Moselle:

"'"My lads, you are a pair of worthy fellows, equal in merit, and I love you with all my heart. One of you shall be my son-in-law—that's a bargain. For that Marguerite will wait seven years. She has no preference either for you, Puvioux, or for you, Chevaucheux; but she loves both of you and will make happy which ever of you Fate shall select for her. This, then, is the condition on which one of you is to marry my daughter. You will go away on the same day, and it is probable that you will come back on the same day; well, which ever of you is first to shake hands with me, and say to him, 'Holloa! here I am—I've served my time!' I swear he shall be the husband of Marguerite!"

"'Truly there are odd accidents in life,' Jean Chevaucheux went on. 'Quitting our native place at the same hour, we were, Pierre and I, put into the same regiment. At first I was annoyed at that. I would rather have had him at a distance for, as you may easily imagine, I could not feel very friendly towards him. But I reflected; having him near me I should at least be able to talk of Marguerite, and that would be a consolation. Then I said to myself; "Seven years! After all, that will not kill me!"

"'In the regiment I became fast friends with Pierre Puvioux—a good fellow, a bar of gold! We often talked of the native peace, of old Servan, and of Marguerite—as a way of killing time, you understand. We frequently wrote to Mezieres, each confiding to the other what he had said in his letter. It was a struggle, of course, but it was carried on loyally. When Marguerite or Servan answered, the answer was addressed to both of us, wishing us equally good luck, giving to each of us an equal dose of hope. So you may be sure we went on hoping.

"'The seven years came to an end. I do not need to tell you my story day by day—our discharge and return route papers, all properly signed, were handed to us.

"'"Well," I said to Puvioux, "at last our time is up; we must set off for home."

"'"Yes," he replied; "they are waiting for our return there."

"'"You know," I said, "that the game will not be finally won before we both get back to Mezieres and the one of us who loses declares that the struggle has been fairly carried through."

"'"All right," cried Puvioux.

"'We shook hands and one morning—the other day—with good shoes on our feet and a stout stick in hand we set off for Mezieres.

"'We set off in company, talking little, thinking much and walking more. It was terribly hot, frightfully dusty, the air as heavy as lead. Half way through one of my daily tramps I threw myself down by the roadside unable to go any farther, my legs stiffened and worn out with fatigue.

"'"Are you going to rest there?" asked Puvioux.

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"'"Yes," I replied.

"'"Good-bye, then," he said, going on.

"'I watched him out of sight walking with a firm step, as if he had only just commenced the journey. When he passed round the bend in the road and I could no longer see him—left alone, as it were, abandoned—a feeling of overwhelming despair came upon me; I made an effort. I rose and continued the march; the rest, short as it was, did me good and put fresh courage into me. I pressed on, on, on, and made such progress that after a while I came up with Puvioux and passed him.

"'But by the close of the day, though I had got well in front of my antagonist, I was done up. I went into an inn and lay down, intending to sleep a little—ah, a little! I slept through the whole night! I awoke only at daybreak, and then I was furious. I called out:

"'"Have any of you seen a soldier on foot go by?"

"'"A soldier? Yes, monsieur—very late last night. He asked for a glass of water."

"'Ah! in turn he had passed me.

"'I hurriedly set off. At three o'clock in the afternoon I had not come up with Puvioux—nor at six o'clock. In the evening I took a rest while eating. The meal finished, on I went again. This time Puvioux should not be much ahead of me! I walked on late into the night, but there is a limit to a man's strength; once more I was obliged to halt.

"'I knocked at the door of a roadside public-house and was admitted. Puvioux was there, seated in an arm-chair, pale as death. He started with irritation on seeing me—not unnaturally. We did not say much to each other; what, indeed, had we to talk about? Then too, we were so horribly tired.

"'It was who should rise earliest next morning—and it was I—and that morning was this morning. All day I have been walking, resting from time to time, but very little; for you know we are near the end. This village is near the end of the tramp from Angers to Mezieres. I know my map of France now!

"'The last tramp—Oh! If I should arrive too late!'

"My father advised the soldier to go to bed at once, and the poor fellow desired nothing better. The bed was ready. Chevaucheux shook us all by the hand and went to the room which had been made ready for him.

"Next day before dawn my father, already up, looked out of the window to see what weather it was. While he was looking up at the sky he heard, down in the street below, the sound of heavy footsteps, and in the uncertain light dimly made out the form of a soldier painfully making his way towards Mezieres.

"'Already *en route?*' asked my father.

"The soldier halted.

"'Well,' continued my father 'are you off?'

"The soldier raised his head and tried to make out who it was who was speaking to him.

"'Are you Jean Chevaucheux?' asked my father.

"'No,' answered the soldier; 'I am Pierre Puvioux.'

"And, as if the name of Jean Chevaucheux acted upon him like a spur he went on his way with increased speed and quickly passed out of my father's sight.

"'Halloa!' said my father; 'poor Chevaucheux will have to bestir himself if he wants to outstrip that sturdy young fellow!' and he went at once to the room in which Jean had been resting.

"The young soldier was already up. He was examining his feet by the light of a candle.

"'Victory!' he cried, on seeing my father. 'I am fresh and vigorous. I am out of pain. *En route!*'

"'And quickly!' replied my father. 'Puvioux has just passed through the street.'

"'Pierre Puvioux?'

"'Yes; I have just spoken with him. He passed under my windows, and is pushing forward like a madman.'

* * * * *

"For three or four years we had no news of Jean Chevaucheux; but we often spoke of that evening when the young soldier entered, bleeding and exhausted, into my father's house. What had become of him? How had ended that love romance so strangely begun?

"One day my father had to go to Mezieres on business, and he took me with him.

"At Mezieres he entered the first barber shop he came to, to get shaved. At the door of the shop was seated an infant, enjoying the sunshine, but at the same time blocking the way with his plump outspread legs.

"'Won't you let me pass?' asked my father, pleasantly.

"'No, I won't let zu pass,' cried the child.

"At that moment a man in his shirt sleeves appeared in the shop—the father—and taking the young gentleman up in his arms, removed him out of the way, saying as he did so:

"'What are you about, Pierre? Do you want to drive away the customers?'

"I recognised the voice. So did my father.

"We looked at the barber, and he looked at us; and suddenly, my father, and I uttered a simultaneous exclamation. The barber was Jean Chevaucheux. He instantly held out his hand. He was flushed and his face beaming.

"'Is it indeed you? Ah, when I think that I have never written to you—how ungrateful I must seem! Have you never heard? It was I who won the bride! I arrived first—first, you know!'

"And rushing to the back of the shop he called:

"'Marguerite! Marguerite! come quickly!'

"He appeared to be out of his wits with joy.

"A young woman appeared, pretty, fair-complexioned with blue eyes; her air gentle, pensive, a little sad even.

"'You see this—this gentleman?' he cried. 'Well, it was he who saved me, the night before I arrived at your father's—of whom I have spoken so often—Monsieur Decary!'

"'Ah!' cried Marguerite, with a sweet smile.

"And, turning upon us her large, calm eyes, she bowed and thanked us gently. Then, as her husband continued to call up the past she looked at him beseechingly, even a little reproachfully.

"But Jean did not see this.

"'Ah!' he cried, 'and it is to you, monsieur, I owe my happiness! My son—my little Pierre—look at him It was by my wife's wish that he was named Pierre—isn't he a fine fellow? My shop, which is going on as well as possible, my wife whom I worship, and my little Pierre I owe all to you!'"

R. Wilson.

An editor of a Western paper says that he has three times put on a clean shirt for the purpose of calling on the Mayor of his town, but did not see him, and concludes an account of his disappointments with the following:

"His worship is respectfully informed that we cannot afford to make another such run on our linen, and if we have the honour of making his acquaintance, he will have no reason to complain if we are not altogether in trim."

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The Armoured Train.

It was a risky task, and the chances were one in a hundred of making a success of it; but nobody stopped to think of that, for the game was well worth the candle, and there was enough excitement to satisfy the most adventurous and daring spirit among us.

The following were Major Leoncio Vidal's plans:

We were to set out at daybreak on the following morning, ride down to the Camajuani Railroad, block the morning train with its load of *guardia-civiles*, compel them to surrender, dress ourselves in their uniforms, enter the town by the train, disguised in that manner, burn it, and then beat a retreat.

All this was to take place in broad daylight, with only thirty men at our disposal, and on the sixteenth day of March, in the year eighteen hundred and ninety-six.

Fun enough, we all thought, and that night, as we sat round our camp-fires, the woods resounded with the voices of our little band, all laughing merrily at the joke we were about to play.

The following morning, at the first note of the "réveillé," the men sprang to their feet, and in a few minutes we were all ready, every one eager for the coming lark.

In a little while we were *en route* for the appointed spot, Major Vidal and I making our number a round thirty, but no one thought of our strength, feeling sure a victory.

Major Vidal was greatly feared by our foes, being a great guerrilla fighter, and as brave a man as ever wore the rebel cockade. He would strike a blow and be miles away, laughing over its success, almost before the drowsy Spaniards awoke to that fact that he had been in their midst.

Before the war he was a resident of Camajuani, a town noted for its loyalty to Spain, and he never lost an opportunity of reminding them of that fact, keeping the inhabitants in a constant state of terror by frequently dashing into the town or firing on the forts—"keeping up his circle of acquaintances," as he called it.

The men looked fighters, every inch of them, dressed in their rough duck suits, and with their broad panama hats thrown back off the forehead; even the horses—faithful little friends—many of which bore the scars of former escapades, looked eager for work as they rattled their bits, wondering where we were going and impatient to arrive.

It was one of those mornings which can never be forgotten. Overhead was the beautiful clear blue sky of the tropics, the air was cool and full of the perfume of wild flowers, and the birds chirped merrily to one another from the branches above—a morning which makes one's thoughts fly back to home and peace, and causes a sigh to escape from the lips as one awakes to the stern reality of war.

Vidal and I rode next to each other at the head of our men, he giving me his orders for the day's work.

"What's that tin can doing there strapped to your saddle?" I asked, noticing a long cylindrical affair hanging by the side of his leg.

"That," he answered, with a broad grin, "is a secret. You will learn its use soon enough."

A short time afterwards we arrived at the line; the troop dismounted, tied their horses to trees and formed, awaiting orders.

I looked at my watch; half-past five. Our train was not due before eleven o'clock, so we had plenty of time in which to do the work carefully.

Vidal had chosen a spot which, if made to order, would not have suited our purpose better. On one side of the railway rose a high embankment, while on the other the earth lay smooth and bare as a billiard-table. Fifty yards further up, the line curved sharply round a wood, which would screen us from view until it was too late for the engine-driver to avoid the trap. Away in the distance loomed the church steeple of Camajuani, from the cross of which floated Spain's flag.

Sentinels were posted some distance apart on both sides of the line, and the men rapidly set to work loosening nails and heaping obstructions upon the metals.

Let me describe for the benefit of the reader what an armoured Spanish train means.

A few months previous to the time of which I write General Gomez had issued a proclamation stating that he forbade traffic of any kind upon the railway, and that fifteen days after date disobedience of orders would be at the risk of life.

The Spanish Government pooh-poohed the idea, but saw fit, however, to take their precautions, which they did in the following manner. An accident, such as being blown up by a dynamite bomb, could not, of course, be avoided, and they decided to fortify the trains so as to make their capture a thing almost impossible—by placing behind the engine a carriage full of soldiers, thoroughly equipped to do battle with a regiment.

The four sides of the carriage were covered with steel plates punctured by diamond-shaped loop-holes, but, in their sagacity, or probably not deeming it necessary, the Spaniards forgot to cover the *roof* in a like manner.

This was their only vulnerable point, but one of which we meant to take advantage, the blockade being so placed as to bring the protected carriage directly underneath the embankment from which we intended to fire.

At eight o'clock the work was finished, and the order was given to prepare breakfast.

Now, a morning's ride and work like that which we had done would sharpen the appetite of any man, and I felt in a condition to do justice to the most doubtful morsel.

When I had finished I walked over and joined Vidal, who still lingered over his frugal breakfast.

"We ought to make a success of this job," he said, looking with a suspicious eye upon a "shady" morsel. "Those beggars will not see the block until it is too late to stop."

"But," I exclaimed, accepting and lighting a cigarette, "suppose they run their engine into that block? It will jump the metals, and then we shall not be able to enter Camajuani as you intend."

"Why, that stuff would never cause the engine to jump the rail. Of course, the driver will see it the minute he comes round the curve, and he will reverse the engine. The obstacle will only serve to bring the train to a complete stop. What we must do is to fire as accurately as possible through the roof and blow the the scoundrels out of the carriage if they don't surrender. The rest is mere child's play."

I didn't quite see where the "child's play" came in, but of course I refrained from saying so.

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"That train is due in twenty minutes," he said, later, glancing at his watch, "so you had better call in the sentinels and post the men."

I turned to obey his orders, noticing as I did so, that he took a long fuse out of his pocket, and I wondered where he had obtained the dynamite, and why he had not mentioned its acquisition to me.

The work had been well done. Enough rubbish was piled on the track to hinder the progress of the engine without causing a derailment, while further back several nails were loosened, to enable us to remove a rail after the train had passed, and in that manner prevent it from shunting out of the trap.

The sentries were soon collected, each man allotted his position, ordered to lie flat on the ground, and when the signal to fire was given to blaze away at the top of the carriage.

By this time "Old Sol" was getting almost unendurable, the back of my neck feeling anything but pleasant, and I mentally blessed the tradition which makes all trains late as the hands of my watch marked eleven and no signs of the train could be seen.

Suddenly the puffing of the locomotive could be heard in the distance, and we knew that the train would soon arrive. Laughter and jests ceased as if by magic—death was in the air.

Now the roar of the wheels could be heard tearing along; another second, and round the curve swung the engine.

In an instant the driver saw his peril and reversed the engine; too late, however, to avoid dashing half-way through the heap, where the engine stuck and the train came to a stop, with the armoured carriage directly beneath us.

"*Diablo!* what's the matter?" shouted a voice from the rear door, followed by a head imprudently stuck through the opening.

The questioner never found out, for a well-aimed bullet killed him. That shot had been the signal, and the men poured their fire through the roof of the car, to the disgust and rage of the Spaniards, who now found the tables turned, being shot down without seeing or firing upon their assailants.

Never had I felt so queer under fire. Here we were pumping lead into a pack of howling, panic-stricken men, while we ran comparatively no danger.

One of our men, carried away by the ludicrous situation, jumped down on the carriage, and in a second lay prone upon his face, pierced by innumerable bullets. He paid dearly for his foolhardiness.

A few moments later the man by my side was wounded, and after placing him in a safe position I returned to my post.

Hardly had I done so when I noticed Vidal making for the top of the bank with the tin cylinder in his hand, leaving in his wake a thin streak of smoke, caused by the fuse which he had lighted.

"This is adding insult to injury," I thought, as I watched him crawl down the embankment; but I consoled myself with the idea that they would have done the same to us, and I proceeded to watch the major.

On reaching the line he drew from his pocket a handkerchief, and holding it above his head, shouted:

"Hey! you men there, stop your firing! I wish to negotiate a small loan which will not inconvenience you in the least."

I repeated the same order to our men, who ceased firing, and were now watching their leader. A strange sight, to be sure, as he stood there, armed from head to foot, holding in one hand the flag of truce, while in the other he carried the bomb, with its spluttering and sizzling fuse.

Out of the door came a pale, horror-stricken face, with eyes that blinked incessantly as they peered through the smoke; a little red line down his chest showed where he had been hit, and I pitied him, as I watched him stand there, waiting for Vidal to speak.

"Now, look here," said the latter, in his commanding manner, "you are all in a pretty bad stew in there"—here the man worked his mouth into a smile which was positively painful to behold—"and I feel for you all. So, after consulting with my captain"—pointing at me, which gesture I acknowledged by saluting the officer, who returned it in a very dignified manner—"I have determined, provided you surrender, to free you all upon the following conditions:

"First, that you pass out all your guns; second, that you exchange your uniforms for ours; and third, that you take up the positions which we now hold."

"And if we refuse, señor, what will happen?" replied the lieutenant, for such he was.

"Why, you will not be in a condition to regret it fifteen minutes later," answered Vidal, as he placed the bomb directly underneath the carriage.

"Here, put that thing out!" cried the Spaniard. "I will agree to your terms. It means dishonour and death to me, but I will do it for the sake of my men."

"It is a soldier's duty to die," replied Vidal, sarcastically. "Make haste," he continued, "for that match won't last all day."

And quick work they made of it, for in ten minutes we stood dressed in the Spanish uniforms, and a pile of arms lay on the ground.

By this time someone had hauled the driver and fireman from beneath the carriage and ordered them to start the train. Placing our prisoners on the embankment, we tipped our hats, and, with farewell words of consolation and advice to them, we started on our way to Camajuani, happy at the success of our venture.

But we shouted too soon, for hardly had we gone a mile when we saw coming towards the line a large body of infantry and cavalry, and we knew that the game was up.

For a moment Vidal thought of attempting to pass as friends, but the risk was too great, the enemy outnumbering us by ten to one; so the train was stopped and the order to retreat given.

The Spaniards saw us, and in another moment the bullets commenced to drop in our midst. It is hard enough work for a cavalryman to run, especially loaded down with the accroutrements of two men, as the majority of us were. I mourned the absence of my little horse, and as I jumped fences and cleared ditches I wondered if André had had sense enough to place him in a safe spot.

Fortunately, the enemy did not pursue us, and after a mile or so we were all brought up breathless in a sheltering wood.

We had lost two men and had three wounded—small pay for such a rich capture of arms and ammunition as we had made.

"Where is that can?" shouted Vidal, after he had recovered enough breath to be able to speak.

No one replied.

"Confound it all!" he continued, "that thing held my only pair of extra trousers; and here I am, dressed in this uniform, with the bright prospect of going through all the war in it."

CYRIL HUMPHREY.

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A REVOLT.

A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

THE forest was awake, and the light mist that floats in the morning air began to shimmer into silvery flakes under the sultry rays of the August sun.

"It is going to be a lovely day," said an early-rising Daisy as she lifted her dainty little head from out a tuft of grass. She drew a long breath, filling her lungs with the balmy air, and stretched her tender green stem, after having bathed in the life-giving dew of the morning.

"Oh! oh!" exclaimed an old white-headed Nettle that lived a few steps off under a grand old oak, and had observed with a grave, experienced eye the morning toilet of her neighbour. "More plans for conquest, my dear Daisy? I fancy that our good friend Buttercup won't be a bachelor much longer judging from the style you are carrying on, you little coquette!"

"Oh, is that you, Granny Nettle? Good morning to you!" and young Miss Daisy bent her delicate head in respectful salutation to Mother Nettle, whom everybody loved and venerated because she always gave such good, sensible advice.

Just then an old thistle, who had fixed his abode between the great stones which made a sort of fortress for him, uttered an exclamation of joyous surprise. Having glanced at his feet on waking up, he had perceived that a family of Violets, to whom he had offered his hospitality, and whom he protected by his influence had been increased by some pretty little ones, who smiled up at him with their sweet amethyst eyes.

During all this the handsome Buttercup had been strolling about with his sweetheart Daisy and flirting lovingly, while a foppish Wood-lily was holding an animated conversation with a Sweetbriar, that blushed with pleasure and bent over him to hear the better his honeyed compliments.

A couple of wild Strawberries lived modestly, a little retired, and watched affectionately the gambols of their numerous and restless offspring, who pushed their noses into everything, as children will do.

"Look out! Look out, my friends!" suddenly cried a young Grasshopper, approaching with hurried bounds. "Another picnic party is coming, like the one that killed so many of you last month; let us form some plan of defence, and not submit to be slaughtered by these human beings without pity or remorse."

This terrible news affrighted all the little groups of flowers, and each one fell to lamenting the hard fate that was impending.

"No! no!" cried the little Daisy, struggling from the arms of the Buttercup, who was trying to kiss her. "I will not submit to be murdered like my sisters—to have my petals torn out one by one to that monotonous litany, 'He loves me! a little—much, dearly—passionately—not at all;' when, unfortunately, the 'not at all' falls on my last leaf, and they throw away my poor mutilated body, and trample furiously upon it to wreak their vengeance. Vengeance for what?—because for the most part I tell them the truth, and should be worshipped as an oracle, instead of slain like a traitor. Let us defend ourselves! War to mankind!"

"For once Daisy is right," said the Nettle. "Look at my case! Do you think that I like to know beforehand that I'm going to be stewed to make a cooling draught for sick people? That has been the fate of all my race for centuries. Vengeance is my cry; I'll show these savages that I can sting!"

"Right," said the Thistle. "I'm with you, and this very moment I will sharpen my thorns to pierce the invaders."

"No murder, I beg of you," said the Mother Violet. "Rather than see the blood of my friends and fellow-citizens flow, I will die myself, with my children. Mr. Thistle, you who are so good, and have so generously given us an asylum in your castle, do not expose yourself to ruin. These people are more powerful than we. Hide yourself under yon great rocks and you will pass unnoticed and escape being torn from our affection and gratitude." And she gazed at him with her great blue, supplicating eyes.

The Thistle, under his rude exterior, had a tender and generous heart, and was deeply moved by this proof of friendship; but he was far too loyal and brave to desert his comrades, and basely seek safety in ignominious concealment; so he insisted on Madam Violet and her daughters taking refuge beneath his tough and well-armed leaves, and promised to be cautious and prudent.

"As for me," said the Buttercup, who would not show cowardice before the martial eyes of his Daisy, "I shall go and seek a family of Ants that lives in my neighbourhood, and to whom I have been able to do many a good turn. Ants are very ingenious people, and may serve us at our need."

"And I," cried a young Daffodil, who was imprudently leaning over the edge of the pond to admire his own image, "I have only to make a sign to our friends, the Frogs, and the entire nation will help us."

Some wild Vines that climbed about the old oak-tree promised their aid also, which was the more welcome, as it was precisely the shelter of the massive tree and its thick foliage that attracted the merrymakers whose advent was so dreaded.

The Lily had been busy while the others were talking, and a whole army of Wood-ticks were already marshalled for the fight.

Some tardy Bluebells that were just opening their eyes and yawning, offered a hiding-place in their blossoms to a legion of Gnats, who were detailed to fall foul of the enemy immediately the battle should begin.

The doughty Grasshopper went to call forth his brethren, promising to be back in good time to spring upon the foe.

An old Squirrel, who had been listening intently to the proceedings, approached near and volunteered for the defence.

"You shall see," said his furship, "how I propose to help you, for I hate these invaders as much as you do—these barbarians, who catch us and put us in a cage that goes round and round every time we try to move—a treadmill for innocent people—horrible!"

"War! war to the knife!" shouted all.

"Silence!" cried the Nettle. "Everyone to his station; no noise; concentrate your strength, and don't begin the attack till the enemy is settled down to gorge! Then we will teach the savage a lesson; nevermore

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shall they dare to invade our solitude or disturb our peace. No mercy! no quarter! Flowerland expects that everyone this day will do his duty!"

* * * * *

Two big wagonettes drew near. "There's the very place they told me of," exclaimed a voice, "there, at the foot of that great oak, on the borders of the pond. Halt!"

Everybody got out of the vehicles, quickly or slowly, according to age or corpulence. Two footmen in livery betook themselves to laying a tablecloth on the grass, and spreading on it all sorts of delicacies—pastries, terrines of foie gras, roast fowls, delicate pink hams, lobster salad with hard boiled eggs and lettuce, fruit, cakes, to tempt all tastes; wines, from humble claret to royal champagne; even boiling water to make coffee; nothing was neglected.

The sharp woodland air had given everyone an appetite; the company hastened to sit down on the grass, not without some jostling, with peals of laughter and rustling of silks.

"Good gracious!" cried a little dimpled fair one all at once, who had sat down near the Nettle, which began the fray by stinging her on the bare arm, "somebody pull up this horrible weed!"

As if these words had been a preconcerted signal, and before the servants could execute the order, a host of Frogs leapt upon the table with a horrible croaking, followed by an army of Ants, and a cloud of Gnats, which attacked the necks, the eyes, and the faces of the holiday makers, who uttered the most lamentable cries of pain and terror. The Wood-ticks fell upon the servants, who literally disappeared from sight under the mass of insects, and were quite unable to attend to the numerous and agonised commands of their superiors. One gentleman, who had torn off a branch from the oak to disperse the Gnats, was so vehemently pricked by the Thistle, that he ignominiously deserted the fray, and ran for dear life.

Then fell on the devoted heads of the company an avalanche of nuts and acorns that pelted them like a hail-storm.

It was the good old Squirrel who sacrificed his winter store in the cause of his friends.

Now came up the Grasshoppers in myriads to reinforce the rest of the attack. There was a terrible battle.

"Let us fly, let us quit this accursed place," screamed everbody; and they fled, routed, and indefatigably pursued by the swarms of insects, the most timid of which plucked up courage to sting and bite—so true is it that "it is only the first step that costs."

After their escape the fugitives stuffed themselves higgledy-piggledy into the wagonettes, which started at full speed, even the very horses being driven to madness by the stinging of the infuriated Gnats, who could not forbear the battle, even though victors.

A few moments after, the Wild-wood Flowers danced a saraband on the damask table-cloth, while the Squirrel, aided by all his family, stuffed his hole in the oak tree with a plentiful provision for the winter, discussing, as they worked, various delicate cakes and unknown dainties, which the unlucky owners had not had time to touch.

The Ants, always provident, did not neglect the possibilities of the occasion to fill their underground storehouses, and a whole macaroon was pushed, dragged, and rolled patiently into their abode, where there was a general indigestion that night.

The Daisy could not contain herself for joy, and allowed her sweetheart Buttercup to embrace her to his heart's content, which condescension so elated that "gilded youth" that his face shone like the sun with rapture; while, to complete the general happiness, the Thistle proposed that the wedding should be celebrated at once, he himself officiating as parson, and making some very poignant remarks at the conclusion of the ceremony. All drank the happy couple's health and prosperity in foaming brimmers of the captured champagne, which unaccustomed beverage caused most of the company to tangle their stalks in great confusion.

Towards evening the forest-rangers, passing by the battlefield, saw with astonishment the pell-mell confusion in which were scattered silver, china, provisions, hats, umbrellas, and shawls; they gathered them up, and took them to the lodge, to be re-claimed by their owners, little suspecting the terrible battle that had caused all this rich spoil to be left on the field.

As they carried these things off they were greeted by a peal of mocking laughter; they looked round, but did not discover that the laugh proceeded from Buttercup and Daisy, who were in good spirits, naturally.

Nobody ever appeared to claim the abandoned property, and, since that memorable event, not a single picnic has dared to disturb the peace and content of the valiant flowers and the gallant allies.

Fred Lyster.

A WORD TO THE SPORTSMAN.

Perhaps the characteristic which, more than all others, is common to every Anglo-Saxon is his love of sport and adventure. Not only does he spend his leisure at home either as an active participant or as an onlooker at one or other of our national games, but his roving spirit carries him into the furthest and least explored corners of the earth in search of game of another sort in pursuit of which he meets with many stirring adventures and hair-breadth escapes.

It is, however, only the fortunate few who possess the time and the means to indulge their tastes in this direction, and most of us have to content ourselves with reading of these things in expensive books or magazines. This will be so no longer, for each Wednesday in future, every reader of these lines will be able to purchase

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A Weekly Magazine of Sport and Adventure.

Pastimes is a publication which will appeal to every sport-loving Briton; it will deal with sport and adventure in all parts of the world as well as at home. There will be special articles by experts upon the questions which are uppermost in the minds of followers of games, interviews with leading lights in the sporting world, sporting stories and tales of adventure—all these and more will be found in Pastimes, which is our old friend Pearson's Athletic Record in a new and greatly improved form.

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A Magazine of Sport and Adventure.

BOOK III.—CONCERNING THE - - RULE OF KING OLERON.

CHAPTER V.

How Murtagh O'Neill essayed the rôle of Theseus: how war was decided on: and how the Ermans refused to learn a "complete art of war" other than their own.

In the olden days, so the fable runs, there was a vast building in the island of Crete, so full of rooms and winding passages that it was named the Labyrinth. In it was imprisoned the Minotaur, a monster half-bull, half-man. The Minotaur's food was human beings, and to supply this delicacy King Minos levied a yearly tax on the Athenians who were tributary to him. They had to send over seven chosen boys, and the same number of maidens, who were thrust into the Labyrinth as food for the monster. Bitter was the wailing of parents; but their tears were of no avail, till Theseus killed the Minotaur by the aid of Ariadne, Minos' daughter.

In like fashion, Murtagh O'Neill was destined to deliver the Ermans from their Minotaur, and, though there was a woman mixed up in the case also, it was for her sake, and not through her instrumentality, that he did the deed.

And this is how it came about.

The trio of them had departed very sorrowfully to their abode on the Ledge, and discussed the situation most thoroughly until far on into the night, but without hitting upon any definite plan. They all agreed that the human tax was iniquitous, savage, and unworthy of the darkest of the dark ages. But how to evade it they could not decide. There seemed, as far as they could tell, but one possible alternative to prompt payment. The envoys might be sent back empty-handed. But what would be the result? Beyond a doubt, Daji would descend upon Erma in all its martial array, and the point would be argued out *vi et armis*. There would be numbers slain on either side—and, alas! eaten by either side—and in the end, could the gentle Ermans hope to triumph over their hardy, warlike adversaries? Even the sanguine Irishman was obliged to admit that case would be hopeless. Man for man the Dajians were the stronger, and they could put a larger force in the field by two to one. Erma was women-swamped still. The ranks of males, thinned by slaughter in the late war, had not yet been refilled.

No. To start such a war, would only be to make matters far worse than they were at present.

So the three turned sadly into their hammocks, and tried to forget their sorrows in sleep.

Morning came, as it will whether raven grief or gaily plumaged joy is on the wing; and with the dawn the three Europeans got to their feet, heavy-eyed, unrefreshed. They didn't speak to one another, but had their morning meal in stolid silence. Each felt the shame put on his manhood, and dared not trust his tongue.

The village below was already astir. The hum of that human hive reached them over the tree tops. With tacit consent they all took their way down the steep path, and then along the stream's side. The birds were singing their sweetest, the flowers were dressed in their most brilliant array. White-bodied kingfishers, with azure heads and wings, were wading in the rivulet. The jewel-backed lizards had come out for the daily sun-bath. Nature smiled and went on with her work as usual. Only man, Nature's eldest child, was in mourning

They came into the village, still garlanded with its lovely orchids, still revelling in the background of brilliant tropical vegetation. But the beauty of the place was repulsive to them; it seemed a malignant mockery to the misery of its human inhabitants.

Married women were sitting down, rocking themselves to and fro, crooning mournfully. Gloomy-faced men were standing about in knots of twos and threes, talking in moody undertones. The young of both sexes seemed almost beside themselves with terror—as well they might be.

The Europeans, unused to so violent a display of outward grief—justly called for though it might have been—could not have stood the scene for long.

Mytto came up to them. "Ebry has been trying to persuade the King to have you sent," he said. "But Oleron made reply that if a white man went to Daji, the chief sorcerer should go with him."

"I guessed Ebry would try that," replied Sneyd. "It was a foolish move on his part."

He said no more then, but the chief sorcerer's amiable intentions on their behalf was not likely to be forgotten by either of the three white men. However, the individual in question put in his appearance just then, and the ghastly object of his visit put all other questions on one side of the nonce. He had with him two bags of *tarpa*, and in sight of every one he placed into each four scarlet beans, and then added into one as many white beans—less four—as there were unmarried girls under the age of twenty; and into the other a corresponding number for the boys. All under the age of thirteen were exempt from the drawing. The rest poor trembling things, were thrust, or came of their own accord, into the centre of the green.

The boys drew first. Ebry called the names, and one by one they came and hazarded their lives. Four got the

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fateful colour, and remained silently and stoically by the chief sorcerer's side. The others ran joyfully back to their relatives.

Then came the girls' turn. Poor shrinking things they were plucky enough too when it came to the point, and dipped their little fingers into the unlucky bag with scarcely so much as a tremble. Ten passed the ordeal unscathed. Then Ebry called for Mytto's sister.

Poor Norah went forward, walking with head proudly erect and unfaltering step. Into the fateful bag went her slender arm. She drew it out again, held up a scarlet bean, and stepped back without a moment's hesitation amongst the four doomed lads at the chief sorcerer's side, she glanced in O'Neill's direction. His burning glance met hers, and in three bounds he was beside her.

"Beware," cried Ebry, "lest you share her fate," and tried to snatch the girl away. The Irishman's great hard fist drove through the air, and the chief sorcerer went to earth with a thud that could be heard all round the circle.

Instantly there arose a scene of wild uproar. The older men, with the memory of that awful war still green upon them, were for sending in their eight victims. The younger men and most of the women were on the side of the whites. Some ran to their homes for weapons, others snatched anything heavy that was at hand—hoes, logs of wood, stones even. O'Neill, with Norah beside him, was standing back to a great cotton-wood tree with his drawn sheath knife clutched in a brawny fist, and a look upon his face that boded ill for anyone who interfered with him. Sneyd and Sandy were at hand similarly armed, ready to back up their companion if he was molested. It seemed as if civil war would be added to the other horror.

The chief sorcerer went to earth with a thud.

The chief of the village saw this. He had been wavering between the two parties with muttering lip and puckered brow. He was drumming restlessly on the ground with a heavy spiked war-club he held in his hand, and was evidently arguing out what course of policy he ought to pursue. He looked at Ebry, who had picked himself up, and was standing in the midst of an excited group of elders. And then he looked at the tree which was the opposite faction's rallying-point. His friends, the three white men, were there; his best loved daughter was with them, saved at any rate for the present; his only son, who would succeed him in the chieftainship, had just thrown in his lot with those who were seeking to protect his sister from hurt.

Maantee's mind was made up. He walked across to the cotton-wood tree, and planting himself in front of the group, leaned moodily upon the end of his club, and awaited developments.

The villagers had most of them been waiting for a lead. They were simple-minded folk, and unused to making up their minds on so momentous a question as one which would mean peace or war for the entire nation. But now that their chief had made his decision, most of them were contented to follow it. He was a man who never stepped in the dark. The move that he had taken, if good enough for him, was sufficiently well considered for them. So some singly, others in knots, they walked across the space, till nearly three-quarters of the excited crowd gathered round the cotton tree.

The few who were left stayed in the middle of the green, with Ebry exhorting vehemently amongst them. But they were far quieter than they had been before the division. They had no wish to resort to arms now. The disparity of numbers was too great. And so they let their weapons hang idly in their hands, and awaited the course of events.

Maantee stood forward. The murmuring voices of both groups were hushed. Every ear was strained expectantly The chief plunged *in medias res* without any useless preamble.

"So far as my village is concerned," he said, "the die is cast. An attempt has been made to levy the human tribute, which the emissaries of Daji are waiting for. Some of us have shown conclusively by our actions that we intend to resist the demand to the uttermost. The majority of us have declared in favour of this move and so the whole are involved. There are two courses left open for King Oleron to take. Either he must band together the other villages and make war on this, so as to subject it and make it render up its quota of victims; or he must bid the others make common cause with us, so that we all stand or fall together as one nation. Those who remember how kind and fatherly is King Oleron's rule, can have small doubt as to which alternative he will take. This terrible tribute has long weighed upon his mind with burning force. He has oftentimes consulted with us, his chiefs, how the island might be released from the cruel impost. And now that a firm stand has been made, I do not think he will be slow to seize on the opportunity of throwing off his chains altogether. So let every man go to his house, and make ready his tools of war. I will away to lay our case before the King. Mytto will have my charge till I return to take it up again."

Long accustomed to the system of patriarchal rule, the villagers received their chief's words with implicit confidence, and departed to their several abodes without delay; and the three whites, after satisfying themselves that there was no immediate fear of any fresh attempt to drag Norah and her co-unfortunates away, took themselves off forthwith to the Ledge.

"Whatever happens we're in for a scrimmage now," said O'Neill, "so we'd better be afther looking to see what there's in the armoury."

They had thought of this subject of lethal weapons before, in the quiet days when there was no immediate prospect of

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using them. The natives had long slender lances tipped with stone, or fish-bones; arrows similarly headed, and weak bows; shields made of light flimsy wicker-work, and great clumsy clubs. These they despised. Broadsword, hanger, or cutlass they would have been contented with; but none of these was forthcoming. The only steel blades available were their sailor's sheath-knives. But these were all worn thin with constant use, and even at its best a short one-edged dagger is but a poor weapon to wield in a regular *bonâ fide* battle, whatever may be its excellences in an indiscriminate hand to hand *mêlée*.

But they were not resourceless. On the 17th of January, 1745, Sneyd and O'Neill had seen the furious rush of the highland clansman at Falkirk break through the centre and left of King George's cavalry. They had seen those same kilted mountaineers doing wonders to avert defeat on the awful 16th of April at dark Culloden Moor. And they had seen them fight at other times besides. They were armed, some of them with musket, dirk, skene, and pistols, but few put much reliance on these. It was on claymore and target they placed their trust; and it was with the small round shields on their left arms, and the heavy basket-hilted broadswords in the other hands, that their furious charges were driven so remorselessly home.

The claymore was a cutting weapon. Its blow depended much upon the weight of blade and hilt, and upon the strength of the arm which drove it. So at a pinch a heavy wooden cudgel might be substituted with almost as good effect.

"You and I are very strong, O'Neill," said the ex-cornet, when they were discussing this point; "and Sandy here is a tougher handful than many of the natives would care about tackling If we can get well-balanced bludgeons, not too light and not too heavy, we ought to make fair stick-play with them; and a light strong target will help to keep our own heads safe, whilst we are endeavouring to break other people's."

There was no bull's-hide available wherewith to make the targets, nor iron plates, nor brass nails, nor steel spikes. But a disc of the iron-bark tree would be hard enough to turn either the point or the edge of a native weapon; and from this material they set about making their shields. The work took a considerable amount of care and patience, but they stuck to it, and got the three targets completed within a day and a half.

O'Neill contemplated his handiwork with a look of comic dismay. "I've fit wid most things from fists to sixteen-pounder carronades," he said, "an' have been in all sorts of scuffles, from pitched battles betwixt kings to chape scrimmages afther a cock-fight, but I've never tried to carry a bulkhead like this in front of me. Begob, but it's a terrible impediment."

"You won't think it an impediment," said Sneyd drily, when you want to parry blow or thrust. "You'll find the wooden bulwark come in more usefully than your unprotected arm could do, tough as shoe-leather though its skin may be."

"Maybe you're right," admitted the Irishman. "Many's the time I've fingered blackthorn at weddin' or wake. But that was always for breakin' heads in a friendly sort of way. With this shillelagh"—he posed his new club thoughtfully —"there's different sort of business to be done. Don't yez think now, that the hard end might be ornamented a thrifle? I've heard me father say, that in the auld days a half-fut or so of scythe-blade let into the end made a very sweet wapon. There's no scythe handy, o' course, but I was thinking that a few nate spikes of this same ironwood would make a handmoser tool of it."

Sneyd shuddered. "War always had its ugly side," he said, "but you are showing up some very inartistic details. Don't be so confoundedly bloodthirsty, man."

"Bloodthirsty is it!" exclaimed O'Neill, with sudden energy. "And why not? I don't deny it. I am going to be bloodthirsty when this business comes on. Look you, I'm going just to kill as many of them Dajians as ever strength an' luck will let me. Dirty, savage-minded cannibals, they cumber the face of the earth."

"They are cannibals, certainly. But, then, remember the Ermans are no better. This is a bad business, anyway. There will be some wild, awful scenes after the fight."

"You mean?" said Sandy.

"I mean that our quiet, gentle friends down in the village yonder will turn to tigers when once they have smelt slaughter. Look how the savage instincts glared from their faces when the row started over that infernal bean-bag. If one blow had been struck, don't you think there would have been a general *mêlée*? And if we three happened to have gone under, aren't you sure that the very men who dined with us yesterday would have dined upon us to-morrow? The reason is obvious, according to their lights. We are reputed clever. We are clever, compared to them. They hold—the teaching of ages has told them—that the brain, the wit, the soul of the eaten is taken up by the eater. Add to which belly is one of their chiefest gods, and human flesh the greatest delicacy. As to the social crime of cannibalism, that has never dawned on them. We were at fault there. Whilst the land was quiet, and we had influence, we should have inveighed against it. Now, I fear, it is too late. They are over-excited to listen to calm and dispassionate reasoning. However loudly we expressed our loathing for such practices, I fear they would never quit the feast, if human flesh was steaming in the ovens."

The other two felt the sad truth of what Sneyd had said, and made no attempt to controvert it. Whatever way the tide of war might turn, there would be black, awful scenes enacted on that fair tropical island before another month had passed away.

But it was no time for unavailing regret. King Oleron had decided for war. The younger and more hot-headed spirits had been for opening the ball by killing and eating the Dajian envoys there and then. But the old King forbade this. His motives for doing so were perhaps not very high ones. He said that, if the men returned to Daji empty-handed, but with sound skins, their countrymen would think that the Ermans felt themselves strong again, and were prepared for the consequences of their act. This idea might take hold, and so war would be averted. On the other hand, if their envoys were—or—disposed of, the news would soon leak out, and then war would be declared for vengeance, if for no other motive. So the scowling savages were put into their canoes with very scant ceremony, and found themselves making for Daji, not at all sorry to find their skins were safe so far.

In the meanwhile no time was lost. The hope that Daji would not seek to reimpose the tribute by force was too slender a one to be much relied upon. War preparations were set on foot without delay, and the whole island was in a bustle.

It must not be supposed that the military re-organisation was anything after the European style. There were no regiments to fill up to a war footing. There were no factories where extra pressure could turn out arms and ammunition in rapid, hourly stream. There was no arsenal full of warlike stores and other necessities for a campaign. Each man provided his own weapons, and held himself in readiness to do whatever his chief ordered. Each man would, more or less, fight for his own hand. There was no mobilisation.

The Ermans had numberless canoes. I suppose one might say they had a fleet. But the Dajians had established such a reputation for naval prowess, that it was decided to make no attempt to give them battle on the seas. So the canoes were drawn up high and dry, and most of them hidden, as far as possible, amongst the mangrove bushes, in swamps, where nobody was likely to come across them.

The three Europeans, with the energy that was their birthright, tried hard, but vainly, to get the chiefs to settle

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on some definite plan of defence. The Ermans had fought for ages according to circumstances which cropped up on the day of battle, and military manœuvres were beyond them. There was not time, when the war trumpet had sounded, to teach tactics to a whole nation utterly ignorant of them. Sneyd laboured earnestly to instil the rudiments of drill into the villagers in his own immediate vicinity. Some of them attended to him at first, out of mere curiosity; but even those soon tired, got listless, and finally strolled carelessly off, and refused to trouble themselves further.

"We have done our best," said Sneyd disgustedly, after giving up his attempt. "But they are just hopeless. If I'd authority I'd brain two or three, to teach the others discipline. But that's the worst of it. I have no real command over them. Mytto would back me up, I believe, if he were chief. But Maantee thinks drilling mere foolery; and although he was too polite to stop me, he's far too apathetic to make the beggars try and pay any useful attention. I even went over and expostulated with Oleron about it, but he's as bad as the rest. He shrugged his shoulders, said something about it being useless to alter what's bred in the bone, and clearly showed he didn't see the use of interfering."

"Things look blue," remarked O'Neill, and then there was a silence, which Sandy broke. "You have omitted one thing from your calculations," he said. "The Dajians are probably just as undisciplined as these fellows are here. So, as regards that, we shall stand on an equal footing of disadvantage."

CHAPTER VI.

How the Dajian canoes landed on Erma: how a great battle was fought: and how Sandy Carmichael discouraged anthropophagy.

The shores of Erma were of two kinds, approachable and unapproachable. The latter consisted of those portions which were fringed with mangrove bushes. These grew in deep, slimy, stinking mud, with the salt water oozing in and amongst them, so that it was hard to tell where sea ended and land really began. No one would think of landing amongst the mangroves. But on the other portions of the coast there was a foreshore of coral shingle, on which one could beach a canoe with the greatest ease.

The shores of Erma were deserted by all human beings. An enemy was hourly expected, but no Erman ever dreamed of turning out on sentry-go during the hours of darkness; and it was night now. The moon had raced her course, and had sunk out of sight under the horizon. But the stars were out, twinkling like little sparks of white or yellow light through the purple darkness overhead. Beyond the black waters of the lagoon one could see a fairly continuous and ever-moving line of white. That was the Pacific swell breaking itself on the jagged coral of the barrier-reef, and spreading into shrieking, yeasty surge. Further out all was veiled in the velvety darkness.

Gradually the blackness began to become less opaque, to thin, as it were. Morning was coming. But it did not rise gradually, after the manner we are accustomed to in our temperate zone. It comes almost as rapidly as the smoke clears away after a gunshot. A grey spectral shadow was cast over the labouring rollers; that was the dawn. Then followed the first rays of light, flashing into view at the far and calm edge of the ocean. A live ember shot up from below, rested for a moment on the rim, and then, in a matter of seconds, the red sun stood full and round on the level east, and the long tropical day had begun.

There were men to see the sunrise on this special day, which was something out of the common. Ocean was as a rule deserted, and land asleep. But although Erma was as usual still wrapped in slumber, there had been some bold mariners piloting their night's course by the stars. When day broke, there might have been seen eight-and-forty canoes, all more or less large, standing in for the entrance of the reef. They were all under sail, and were all lashed two and two in a manner which has been previously described. They were in no particular order or formation, and the sternmost craft was at the end of a broken line that straggled quite three miles away from the leaders. But this seemed to concern no one. Canoe after canoe slipped out of the heavy ocean swell into the smooth waters of the lagoon. Steersmen aroused their sleeping crews, and sail was run down. The double canoes were separated into their component vessels, each manned by a complete crew of paddlers who were also fighting men.

There was no hurry exhibited. The shore was apparently (and really) still deserted, but the first invaders showed no immediate inclination to disembark. They sat in their narrow craft eating up the remainder of their sea stores, chatting, inspecting their weapons. Not until the last laggard had come in through the barrier reef, and leisurely prepared for action, was the word passed round to head in for shore.

To view the combat from the side of the Ermans.

All the males of the island, save the aged and very young, had been turned out at the first alarm, and mustered on the beach. They were in ample time to receive the invaders. They could have done nothing by being earlier. The white men's notion of planting sentries was new, and therefore absurd. As it was, by sticking to tradition, no one of them had lost their night's repose; and if one or other of the whites had been on the watch all night, well, there was no doubt as to who was the loser by such a piece of foolery. Why, they had even had time to send the women and children away into tolerably safe hiding in the woods, in case of—well in case of any awkward contingency.

So they stood on the shingle, and wasting their wind by calling out insulting names to the advancing Dajians, which the Dajians on their part returned with interest. These preliminary vollies did no one any harm, and did no one any material good. But the interchange of verbal courtesies of this kind is a necessity to savage nations before they feel in fighting trim, as we learn from Homer and other writers who have chronicled their deeds.

When the canoes were within range, or a little before, missiles began to be exchanged. The Dajians heralded their coming with a few arrows, but most of them were too busily engaged in paddling for the supply to be large. The Ermans, on the other hand, having no other occupation, relieved their excitement, which was naturally intense, by firing as rapidly as their muscles would let them. They shot their arrows, which did but little harm; they threw lances, which, for the most part, fell wide of the mark; and they hove jagged prices of coral, which, if true to their aim, either bruised or benumbed, but never killed.

And so the keels of the canoes grated on the shingle with but few casualties amongst their occupants.

However, there had been enough shouting, and enough of ugly matters hurling about to get men's blood up; and so there was little hesitation in commencing the next phase of the combat. In the canoes in the water, on the white shingle, the battle sprung into red cruel life. It was hack, hew, thrust, and parry; and as the savages grew savager, it grew to be hack and hew, and thrust alone, for each panted to get a blow home in his adversary's body, rather than to guard his own head from fracture.

The slaughter was immense. It always is when men fight hand-to-hand, instead of aiming at one another with fire-arms, which they can't hold straight. It was a case of kill or be killed, and very often of kill and be killed. The combat reddened as it proceeded. The white coral strand was crimsoned in the places where it wasn't hidden with still or writhing bodies. The ruddy wavelets washed corpses to and fro at the water edge. There was no sparing of wounded men. If any one went down some one was sure to smash in his skull with a mace, or slash him with a heavy wooden sword, and then the rest of the combatants would

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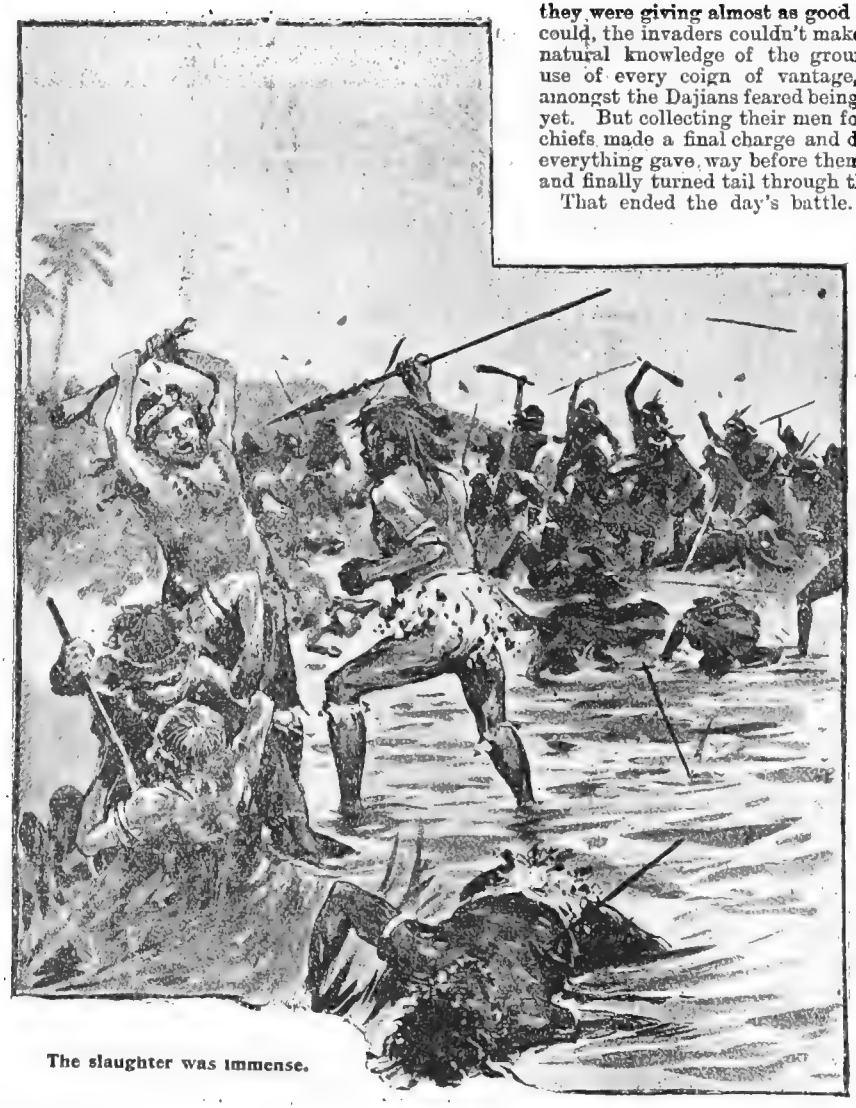

The slaughter was immense.

trample him thoroughly under foot to make sure that he wouldn't come round again. It was a hot thing whilst it lasted.

Gradually—none could say when or where it began—the field of battle began to move. At first it drifted slowly, but once the mass of men had gone on the move, its own momentum helped to keep it going. Indeed, till they found themselves amongst the outermost scraps of the vegetation, few on either side knew that retreat and pursuit had in effect commenced. But the change from cool, splashing water, to scratching stubborn shrubs was too marked to pass by unnoticed even in such a tropical fight as that was; and so, whilst it filled the Ermans with feelings akin to despair it raised the hopes of the men of Daji even above what they were before.

But the battle was not finished yet. Disputing stubbornly every inch of the way, the Ermans fought on with stubborn fury, and many a stout man went to earth in cover that was too thick to make sure where the lethal blow came from. Nor was the day lost or won. That the Ermans were in retreat—compulsory retreat—it is true, but they were giving almost as good as they took; and do what they could, the invaders couldn't make them run. Indeed, from their natural knowledge of the ground, they made such thorough use of every coign of vantage, that the more faint-hearted amongst the Dajians feared being driven back into the sea even yet. But collecting their men for one berserk effort, the Dajian chiefs made a final charge and delivered it with such fury that everything gave way before them. The Ermans wavered, broke, and finally turned tail through the trees.

That ended the day's battle. There was no pursuit. The Dajian leaders knew too well the danger of ambushes in such thick jungle as that into which the Erman army had filtered away. Besides, their men's skins were too full of wasps' stings to chance them near any more wasps' nests. So they drew them off, and taking possession of a deserted village on the coast, overhauled the field of battle, licked their wounds, and spent the rest of the day and much of the evening eating—well, if you can't guess what, I'm not going to tell you.

It is a strange thing, but if a bagged fox be set down in his own neighbourhood, he will run (if circumstances permit of his running long enough) for his own earth. He may start off in a totally different direction. But in the end he is sure to make for the old familiar cavity.

And so with the Ermans. Many of them ran a long way through the woods; many hid there for a considerable number of hours, out of wind, out of spirits; but by nightfall, all who were capable of doing so instinctively moved back towards their own proper villages. They advanced to them cautiously, carefully, suspecting ambushes, trembling at a sound, hiding from their own friends, dodging their own brothers. But they reached their homes—all save those unfortunates whose settlement was occupied by the Dajians—and then they, too, must need start their orgie.

Again details are needless. And for comment we may say that they didn't know any better.

But in the village which was under Maantee's patriarchal government there was a row about the matter, and the three Europeans were at the bottom of it. It happened in this wise. They had fought for all they were worth so long as fighting was going on, had each done more than his share of damage to the invaders' limbs and bodies, and then when everybody else ran, they ran too. Having nowhere better to go to, they followed the fox's plan and ran home. There they turned from killing men to curing them. At this latter practice Sandy added to his already great reputation, and bandaged, sewed, splinted, and amputated with as much coolness as he had done on board ship with a proper case of tools, and every piece of special tackle ready to hand.

He was in the act of relieving Maantee of a couple of badly-smashed fingers, when a great shouting arose close by, of which he naturally inquired the reason.

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"They're bringing in some Dajians."

"Prisoners?"

The chief smiled. "No, they're dead."

"What are you going to do with them. Bury 'em?"

Maantee signified that portions of the deceased would shortly be entombed in his own stomach.

Sandy Carmichael went stolidly on with his operation; amputated the fingers, and dressed the stumps. Then he wiped his knife on a tuft of grass, replaced it in the sheath slung to his belt, and addressed his patient.

"Maantee," he said, "why do you wish to eat those dead men?"

"To obtain their strength and their courage," replied the chief, promptly, "and to add it to my own."

"You can do no such thing. The notion is an utterly mistaken one."

"My fathers believed it," said Maantee, significantly.

"Then your fathers were in error, as they were about many other things. Continue this horrible custom, and the war will go against you. Give it up, and you will triumph over the men of Daji, who still continue it."

The chief shrugged his shoulders, and showed signs of going away. Sandy laid a restraining hand upon his arm. "Maantee," he said, "I would that you had accepted a warning from my mouth. Now I must use a force known to the white men from the East alone. Your sorcerers have it not. They have not so much as imagined its existence. I am going to make those dead Dajians speak, and confirm what I have said."

Maantee's brow darkened.

"It is ill to make jest of some matters," he said, and again made as though he would move away.

"Wait," exclaimed Sandy. "For the second time you have despised my words. Now I will not spare you any part of the ordeal. All your warriors are collected there on the green. Come to them, and cry for silence."

The chief did as he was bidden, and being somewhat angered at the manner in which he had been taken to task, added maliciously that the youngest of the white men could by sorcery make the corpses speak. He made no comment on the avowal, but the simple statement was sufficient. An instant hush fell upon the assembly, and every eye was turned upon Sandy Carmichael.

In the centre of the green, a wood fire was burning and crackling away in a pebble-lined pit. The naked corpse of a Dajian lay on the soft mossy turf beside it. The juxtaposition was suggestive. Sandy took his stand near there, and the villagers grouped themselves in expectant semicircle opposite him. Sneyd and O'Neill, seeing that something was going on, came up and stood near their companion.

Sandy was very nervous at first at having to speak before so large and attentive an assembly, but he gained confidence as he went on, and before a dozen sentences had passed his lips he was fully warmed up to the work.

"I want to warn you against the horrible food which lies here before me," he said, "ready for the oven, which is even now heating for its reception. The island teems with provisions. Your meals are got for the plucking. You do not desire human flesh because your frames are wasted through scarcity of food. You would feast upon the body of your fellow-creature through a mistaken notion that with the flesh you take up the qualities. You think to swallow a share of the dead man's courage, his strength, his nerve, his wit, and add it to your own——"

"And so we shall do," exclaimed the crowd. "Our fathers have told us that it is so."

"Your fathers told you many things; but, being men, they were liable to err. They erred in this. It is impossible to take from a dead man his good qualities. They fly away into the air as soon as ever the body is killed. It is only the bad qualities that remain; cowardice, treachery, fear. And these it is that you gain when your stomachs have received the horrible meal."

A strong murmur of dissent hummed from the crowd, and more than one fist was clenched in menace.

Sandy held up his hand for silence, and proceeded:

"You do not believe me," he said, "and perhaps it is not to be wondered at that you refuse to take my single word against the united testimony of all your forefathers. But I will bring evidence to your ears that will convince them even against their strongest desires. See this Dajian beside the oven. His skull is smashed to a pulp with a club blow. He has been stark and stiff for hours. It matters nothing to him whether his body is buried in Erman ground or in Erman stomach. He has no cause to lie now. If he speaks you will believe him?"

The assembly replied with a contemptuous affirmative. They had little fear that speech would pass from those cold dead lips.

Sandy Carmichael bowed, as though accepting a challenge to make good his words, and then, turning, walked away into the shadow of the trees. Presently he came back bearing with him an armful of leafy branches. He proceeded to cover the corpse with these, taking care that no portion should remain exposed. Then, taking the burning logs from the fire, he threw them on the branches, till the dead Dajian was covered with a pile of blazing wood.

"The cold body is being warmed with the heat," he said, "and presently it will be able to answer my questions."

There was no reply to this observation, save for a contemptuous laugh from one or two of the villagers. But of this Sandy took no notice. He was gazing intently at the fire, and making signs with hands and arms to something in the flames visible apparently to himself, but unseen or unnoticed by all besides.

The chief shrugged his shoulders and showed signs of going away.

There was a ten minutes' pause. The natives' superstitious feelings were thoroughly worked up. Everything was mysterious. The surroundings fitted the scene. Night

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The crowd of natives shrunk back in superstitious horror.

had fallen, darkly and suddenly. The great fire blazed in the middle of the clearing; hissing, crackling, throwing up wavy tongues of flame into the smoky gloom overhead. Beside it was the white man, making his incantation. Around was a ring of savage figures, partly lighted up by the glare, partly in deep shadow. Beyond were the thick woods.

Not a human sound was heard; each breath was checked. Every man of Maantee's village was ripe for receiving wonders.

Suddenly a noise as of a sigh arose from the burning pyre. The white man bent down his ear, said something in a low voice and in his own tongue, and then moved a pace or two backwards.

A thin querulous voice, proceeding apparently from the very heart of the flames, broke upon the stillness of the assembly. The tones were faint at first, as though the speaker was weak and weary, but they increased in strength to loudness as he went on.

"Why do you wake me?" asked the voice. "Have I not lived my earthly life, and passed from it hardly enough? I have been weary, weary, weary; and this blow on the head gave me sleep. 'Tis hard to be roused now. Let me rest again."

"The Ermans," said Sandy, "would eat your body."

"Ha! ha!" The voice gave vent to a horrid grating laugh. "I daresay. I should be eating Ermans now, were I alive. We of Daji were as ignorant as they."

"How mean you, ignorant?" inquired Sandy.

"We thought that with the body we caught the spirit, that which nerves the arm, and fills the brain, and makes wit, courage, skill in war. Poor dolts that we were!"

"Then where is this spirit?"

"It sits beside my head. You cannot see it, though it is visible to me. It is a colourless shape, clear as water, light as a breath, untouchable as that which exists not. Water cannot harm it, nor fire, nor any power that is in man's hand. Yet in it is all that was ever good in me. Only the bad qualities remain in my body. You can have them if you will. Eat this dead flesh, and they are yours. And now, O mighty sorcerer, let me sleep again."

"Sleep!" responded Sandy, and coming near he kicked away the burning brands, and exposed to view the corpse in exactly the same condition in which it had been before.

The body was uncharred; the face was unblackened; not a hair was singed from the head.

The crowd of natives shrunk back in superstitious terror. The white man's authority over fire, and his power over the dead, was to them something superhuman.

They accepted what they had heard without question. Such evidence could not be gainsaid.

"So, Sandy," said Sneyd, when they had got back to the Ledge, "you have stopped cannibalism in Maantee's village by a little bit of conjuring. I don't care for trading on people's ignorance as a general thing, but in this case the end fully justifies the means. The ventriloquism I could understand; but what beat me was, how you managed to build a bonfire on the top of that poor Dajian fellow which didn't roast him."

"Well," said Sandy, "that was a trick that I got hold of by accident. Whilst I was cooking the other day, the glare of the fire made my eyes ache; so I plucked a branch from a shrub near at hand, to shelter them. Imagine my surprise to find that it completely warded off the heat as well.

"I made more investigations with the foliage of the same plant, and found that by waving branches of it round me, I could actually walk through a fire, or even sit in one without getting scorched. The shrub is a fairly common one,* though I don't know its name; but none of the natives seem to know of this particular property it possesses. And so that is why I ventured to turn it to profitable account."

(To be continued.)

* The shrub is *Tii*. It was very well known to the idolatrous priests of Tahiti. They made use of this property of quelling the heat of flames, to assist in the performance of miracles, which otherwise would not bear a close scrutiny. They used to perform conjuring séances in the middle of a zone fire; and holding branches of the *Tii* plants, they were rendered impervious to the fiery tongues of flame with which they were surrounded.

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SHE BOUGHT IN QUANTITIES.

MR. AND MRS. DASHER had not gone on a honeymoon; they had determined to stop at home and economise. The father had given her a cheque for fifty pounds, and Uncle Openpurse one for a hundred.

When hubby had gone away to business after breakfast she rushed upstairs and put on her bonnet, while her fingers trembled with suppressed excitement and a scarlet flush intermittently suffused her damask cheeks. Looking into her purse for the three-hundred-and-forty-fifth time to see if the notes were all right, she tripped down the stairs and sought the butcher's shop.

"I want some beef," she smiled.

"I have an excellent cut here, madam; sweet as a nut; it weighs about three pounds."

A brilliant flash of scorn came out of her eye, and struck the portly butcher.

"What is your lowest wholesale price for an ox?"

He quoted twice the amount he had given, and awaited results.

"Please send me two of them round as soon as possible to this address—stop, you can make it three. And now I would like some liver; I *do* so love liver and bacon."

The price, to her mind, being moderate, she paid for twenty pounds of liver, and for ten pounds of pork sausages, and a quarter of a ton of ice to keep it all cool.

Then she sailed down the street to the grocer, and asked the sum required for butter.

"The best is eighteenpence a pound, m'lydy; can't be beat anywhere."

Her sweet little nose was lifted high in scorn, and the grocer shivered before a withering glance.

"I shall require four tubs, if you please; also seven Cheddar cheeses, and a barrel of moist sugar. If you will quote your lowest wholesale price for treacle, you may send ten pounds, and I should also like a dozen hams, and a box of eggs. This is the address. Good-morning."

The grocer sank into a tub of margarine as her dainty form melted through the doorway. And as he sat there, in a state of collaspe, she returned hurriedly, and added an order for two barrels of flour and fifty bladders of lard.

The fishmonger wiped his hands on his apron, and began flopping about a fine hake, when she started to interview him.

"I want rather large quantities of fish, if you please," while her eyes glistened with a strange and glad light. "What are your bloaters a box, a chest, or barrel, or however you sell them? I want some whitebait, too. I *love* whitebait. I also shall require four or five dozen eels, if you can let me have them; my husband loves eels. Also, if you have some crabs and lobsters, you might let me have six dozen of each, only they must be alive."

The tradesman swallowed a shrimp, and his wonderment, and made entries in a large book, and when she had given him the address, she left for the live poultryman's place of business lower down the street.

Mrs. Dasher had a theory of her own about poultry. She was fond of a nice duck, and still more so of a cut from a goose, while she was a perfect Russian in her hankering after turkey. But she never had swallowed any part of one that had been bought dead, for, you see, she had been brought up on a farm.

So, after much scrupulous examination, she decided that three dozen roosters, together with a score of ducks, and thirty-three turkeys (the odd three being thrown in because of the quantity bought), and forty-seven geese would suffice her purpose for the time being.

But, you will say, kind reader, is this economy? Read on. Strange and unfathomable are the ways of woman, especially the woman newly married. Mrs Dasher was economy itself.

On her way back she met a man with a barrow selling oranges. They were large and ripe-looking and mouth-watering, and she asked the price (just as a matter of form), and paid for the lot, and told the man where to take them.

Outside the building where she and her hubby rented four rooms were arranged some half-a-dozen carts, the practical and satisfactory result of her morning's hard labour. Her eyes glistened, and a glad smile played about her lips as the sight met her gaze.

As she swept round the corner, two men were carrying in the carcase of an ox, followed by three others supporting a block of ice in a blanket, and in their immediate footsteps followed a man struggling with the bloaters.

At length they went, and she, despatching a messenger for her husband, nimbly scrambled over the purchases, and tried to make things a bit straight in the drawing-room, where most of the goods had been lodged, owing to want of supervision, before she had come.

After a time she thought she heard her husband calling, but the fowls were singing so sweetly to the accompaniment of the turkeys, that she could not discriminate.

He came through the window at last, for the doors were blocked with goods. He stepped on some split whitebait, which were slippery, and sat down, shooting his legs into the crate of crabs, and bringing down two blocks of ice on his lower chest, while seven geese resented his efforts to strangle them, and one eel went down the back of his neck and another up the sleeve of his coat.

After the ice had melted, he was able to get up, and then he made his way to where his wife's voice sounded high above the feathered chorus. She could not come to him because, through some mischance, she lay on a bed of eggs with a sheet of treacle, and a counterpane of calves' liver over her.

Mrs. Dasher began to get unhappy. She whimpered. She grumbled. Mopping the treacle out of her sweet mouth, and shaking a calf's liver out of her back hair, she tried to explain.

"Oh, I'm so miserable," she said, drawing a bloater out of her belt and dashing it in a tub of butter. "I didn't know it was going to be like this. I don't think your plan is good. I wish I had taken ma's advice. Oh, I am so miserable."

Before he married her, Dasher had impressed upon her the fact that, to economise, goods should always be bought in quantities.

"Strive to do a wholesale business as much as possible," he had said. 'For you get things much cheaper that way. Yes, strive."

She had striven.

JOHN MARTIN

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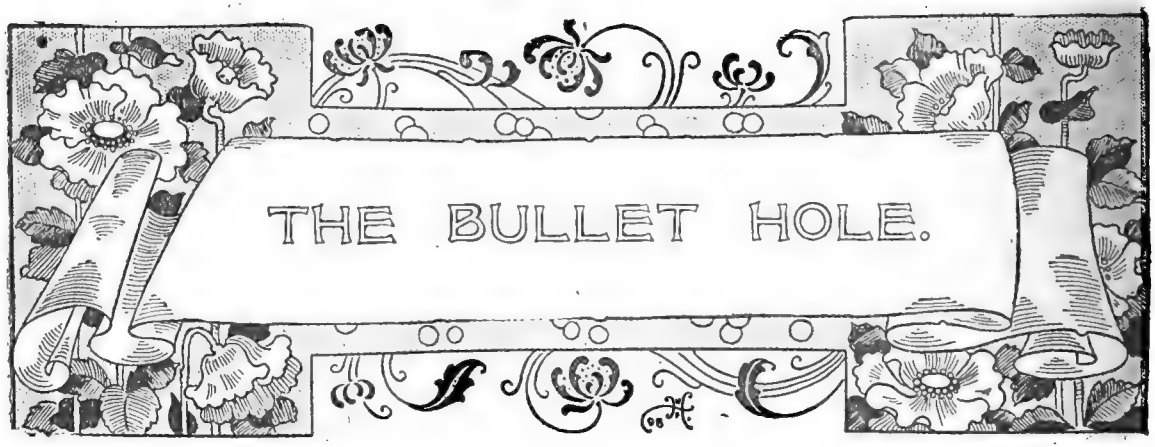

CHAPTER I.

The Insult.

The lustres sparkled in the faint bluish light that filled the drawing-room. It was so still that you might have fancied the place unoccupied, if a woman's low laugh had not broken the oppressive silence. By following the shining panels on the wall in the direction of the bow window, you caught first a glimpse of a jewelled hand twisting the fringe on the *portière*, and the red glint of a ruby necklace on a woman's white throat.

She was talking in musical monotone to someone in the shadow at her side. The voice that answered her from the semi-gloom belonged to Austin Gerard, the much-envied and much-maligned millionaire, whose escapades are still the talk of the town.

There was something soothing in the sound of her voice—a cooing intonation that fell upon the ear pleasantly.

When he spoke the tones were cold and passionless, and he kept up an incessant drumming on the arm of his chair with his long, white fingers as though he were nervous.

Had the lights been brighter, you might have seen that the lady was as dainty in colour as a panel by Carlo van Leo. The searching sunlight might have revealed some tints endowed by a not altogether beneficent nature, particularly about the eyes and cheeks, but at night she was adorable, from the sparkling slippers to the fairy foam of laces on her shoulders skilfully disarranged. Why this languorous light, these whispered words? What were they to each other?

"Ah!" It was the first exclamation she had uttered aloud. Gerard turned towards her hastily. She had risen, and was regarding him with a peculiar look in her eyes that baffled him. Surprised, he turned towards the drawing-room door. A man had entered noiselessly, and was standing before the fireplace warming his hands by the burning logs. Gerard started, and at that moment his companion struck him heavily across the mouth with her ringed hand.

"Coward—scoundrel!" she cried in a loud and angry voice.

Stung with surprise, before he could say a word she had glided from the room, her eyes blazing, her whole nature in a tumult.

Gerard stood looking after her dumbly, as if he half hesitated whether to follow or not. Then his eyes turned towards the fireplace and the stolid figure standing there. The man was now facing him, and his voice trembled with anger when he spoke.

"I shall not ask the meaning of this, to-night, Mr. Gerard. You are under my roof, and have a claim on my hospitality."

"But, my dear Drayton, I——"

"Enough! I prefer to hear the truth from my wife's lips. If affairs are as I believe, I shall demand an explanation from you to-morrow. Go!" And he pointed imperatively towards the door. "Go!" he repeated.

Gerard laughed nervously, picked up his hat and coat, and turned away. At the door he paused, and looked back. Drayton was still standing by the fireplace, as still as the alabaster caryatides that upheld the mantelpiece, though in his eyes there was an expression that Gerard did not care to see. But he shrugged his shoulders with an affected carelessness, buttoned up his coat, and went out into the snowy night.

After the door slammed, Drayton still stood in the same place. Once in a while his eyes wandered towards the embrasure where he had witnessed this strange scene—strange, and yet he seemed to understand it thoroughly. He threw his cigar, which had gone out, into the grate, and turning out the gas, laboured heavily upstairs.

"Marian," he called softly at the door of his wife's boudoir, "Marian."

She had taken off her evening dress and assumed a tea-gown of dark blue Chinese silk. She looked like a violet with a heart of gold. He saw that she had been crying, for tears still trembled about those eyes he had so often kissed to sleep. His heart grew hot within him as he thought of the scene that had just happened below. He drew her towards him, and kissed her softly on the forehead.

"Was he—did he?" stammered the poor fellow.

She laid one finger softly on his lips.

"Forget it—forget it—what you saw," she murmured. "You frighten me with that terrible look in your eyes."

"I want to know all—all," with sudden vehemence, "or——" He laid his hand half caressingly on her arm, and led her passively to a lounge in the corner. "Come, you shall tell me everything in your own way; take your own time, darling. Why, you—you don't think I am angry with you? Why——" and he kissed her

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again, as if that were more expressive than any words. "Come, tell me—tell me," giving her a gentle shake.

"I cannot—cannot," turning her face away again, and covering her eyes with a lace handkerchief.

There was an angry contraction of his features. He spoke now in a hard voice.

"You must! I will have a complete explanation of this strange scene. Now, why did you receive this man? You know his character; why did you receive him? Why not send down word you were ill?"

"I was alone in the house. I knew you had gone out without your key, so I answered the bell."

"Hum." His face cleared a bit. "Let us come to the point. What did he say to you?"

"I cannot tell you."

"He insulted you?" Silence. He pulled the handkerchief away from her eyes. "Answer me."

She answered him by bursting into tears upon his shoulder. He was satisfied. He felt a remorse that he had questioned her so severely now. He had done wrong to torture her so, and begged to be forgiven. There was some cologne upon the dressing-table, and he bathed her face softly, soothing her meanwhile with tender words, while he stroked her beautiful hair caressingly.

"My poor darling," he murmured brokenly, "how you have been injured! What pain you have suffered!"

She had grown more composed now; her sobs were fainter.

"Forget it, dear, as I shall try to do," reaching out her hand towards him.

"Forget it," he echoed, looking at her in a way that frightened her. "I will settle accounts with him to-morrow."

"What do you intend to do?"

"I will kill him, or he shall kill me!"

"A duel; impossible. You are not in France; the survivor would be called a murderer."

"I can arrange it so that no suspicion need be excited; so that it can be proved that the one who falls committed suicide."

"But, Arthur," faintly.

"Well?"

"To fight with him would be going to your death. He is an unrivalled shot. Have you no thought of me—of leaving me alone in the world? What is this man's life worth to yours? Better endure a thousand insults than to lose you." And her arms were again about his throat, and tears filled her beautiful eyes.

"I am determined," he said, "and something assures me," as he brought his teeth tightly together, "that I shall not be the one to fall." There was a short cry; she shuddered in his arms. "Be calm, my love; the right will conquer wrong," he added softly.

Her eyes opened slowly as he put her gently from him, and began walking slowly up and down the room. Her glances followed him with painful persistence as she leant back against the cushions, breathing heavily.

"I will leave you now," he said finally, pausing in front of her; "there is much that I must do before the morning."

Then a sudden strength seemed to seize her. She rose and moved towards him with resolute steps, standing between him and the door.

"You shall not leave this room until you have promised to give up this mad scheme," she said firmly.

"I have made up my mind."

"You shall not risk your life; no, nor take another's."

He made a step towards her, his eyes bent intently on hers, as if to read some new revelation in the strange light that filled them.

"Marian"—he paused and looked at her again; her figure seemed to flatten out against the door as if that glance were crushing her—"if you do not let me go, I shall think that you are afraid of the consequences to *him!*"

She clutched at the portiere as he passed out at the door. Then she turned, with set eyes looking into space. "If he should die!" came the husky whisper; "if he should die!"

CHAPTER II.

Alone.

It was late in the morning when Marian awoke. She had taken some sedative to make her sleep. The clock chimed the hour of ten, and through her drowsy brain flashed the scene of the night before. She shivered as she hurried through her toilet. Perhaps there was still time to stop this dreadful affair.

"He will be killed! I know it—I feel it," she murmured, brushing out her lustrous hair with a trembling hand. The mirror was before her, and she could not help seeing how wan and grey her face looked in the dim light that filtered through the Madras curtains.

"I have aged ten years since last night," she thought, as she turned away.

The door of her husband's room adjoining was standing open when she reached it. There was no one within. Everything was in order. On the secretary by the window lay a large package addressed to her. She looked at it for some moments as if fascinated.

"To be opened to-morrow if I do not return," she read on the edge of the envelope.

"If I do not return," she repeated blankly, with a shudder. "If I do not return."

The sight of that white envelope seemed to irritate her. She picked it up and threw it hastily into the drawer of the secretary, locking it and placing the key in her bosom. Then she sat down on the sofa again. Her eyes roamed here and there about the room. She saw on the wall the portraits of her husband and herself in a morocco frame. The picture had been painted during their honeymoon, three years before. A handsome couple, people had said, and now—she turned her face away and closed her eyes.

She saw that face in a changed light. It was pallid and contracted, and on the broad white forehead there was an awful stain of blood. And then the closed eyes seemed to open, and a wavering finger pointed towards her, while the cold lips uttered one awful word.

She screamed and fled from the room to her own, where she locked and bolted the door. It seemed to her as if that shadow which her brain had conjured up was following her, and its rolling eyes were turned with sad intent upon her, while the lips muttered that terrible word in her frightened ears.

She stumbled towards her dressing-case and took a bottle of some brown fluid out of a little drawer. When the cork was withdrawn, it emitted a strong, sickening smell, that filled the room. She looked behind her with a furtive shudder, hesitated a moment, then lifted it to her lips. When she laid the little bottle down it was half empty. Keeping her eyes steadily away from the

door, she moved slowly towards the sofa and lay there, face downwards, her face buried in the cushions.

Someone was bending over her, she was sure. Her husband with his livid face stood before her, with that dreadful wound on his brow. His cold lips were close to hers; slowly his rigid arms were reaching towards her. She screamed aloud and beat upon the walls with her hands. The diamond rings he had given her seared her fingers; the stones had become coals of fire. She drew them off and flung them from her. Where was that music? In the street? No; in the room. How soothing it sounded in the quiet room! She did not turn to see whence it came, lest this magic music might cease and the spell be broken.

Her terrors have been deadened by these delightful melodies. They revived all that was beautiful in her life, with none of its distress. The light drives away the darkness.

No longer that terrifying figure of her husband stands before her. It is her lover kneeling by her side, and in his eyes there is a divine light that is not of earth. Kisses burn her lips and fill her with a glorious exultation. He leads her away, and the walls melt before them into thin air. They pass through jewel-studded colonnades into a wondrous garden where all is musical and bright, and where iris-tinted birds flit here and there by waving palms and tinkling silver streams. And lulled by the perfect air in this Lethean land she lays down dreamily by a glistening pool among fragrant blossoms that fall in rosy showers from the tree above her head.

The balmy breeze caresses her floating hair. Above her head a bird with jewelled wings pours out its soul in song, as sweet as if the very spirit of love inspired each note. Lapped in this atmosphere of perfume, love and song, she rests her tired head upon her arm and drifts away into oblivion's sea.

CHAPTER III.

The Reckoning.

The night closed in with sleet and snow. Marian stood by the window peering out between the curtains on the street. She had lit all the lights in the chandelier and the candles in the sconces on the wall, it was so much more cheerful to banish all the shadows from every corner. Oh, if there were only some light to dispel the shadow from her heart that was bearing her down! She listened, but no one came.

Once a man paused in front of the house, but he passed on through the snow. Few carriages were abroad, but every one that passed sent a shudder through her heart, and she would lean faintly against the wall and press her hands tightly against her breast, that seemed full of burning pains. But the carriages passed by, and the hours, and no one came. She had eaten nothing all day, and at last she found herself too weak to stand at the window and watch.

Her untasted supper lay on the table where the maid had left it. She must have strength for what was certain to come. She dragged herself forward by leaning on the chairs, and lit the spirit-lamp to heat up the tea in the samovar.

The sight of food was repellent to her, but she managed to force a few mouthfuls down, and the tea warmed and strengthened her. Only her heart was as cold as ice, and throbbed as though it were forcing its way through her breast, panting for freedom. Was that a step? Someone in the hall? The dainty Sevres cup crashed on the plate as she felt a hand seize her arm with a cruel grasp. She shook it off, and without daring to turn her face, crawled towards the corner of the room with averted eyes.

"Who is it? Who is it?" she asked herself in a fever of doubt. "Oh, if he would only speak—only speak!"

"Well?"

It was her husband! She felt a ringing in her ears, a sudden numbness seize her as if she were losing consciousness.

He laughed and walked towards her slowly.

"Look me in the face," savagely catching her sleeve and dragging her close to him. "Look at me, I tell you," raising her head towards his.

She could not help seeing that his features were contracted, and that where he had bitten his lips there was blood that had trickled down on his white shirt. He looked as if he were going mad. She could not turn away, he held her in such a grasp.

"Why are you not glad to see me?" he asked with a terrible smile. "I can see that you have spent the day in tears on my account, and now that I have returned safe and well, having settled everything satisfactorily, why do you not fly to embrace, to weep over me? Why? I ask you why?" with an awful laugh.

She reached out her arms towards him with a wretched attempt at fondness in her eyes, and the phantom of a smile on her lips.

"Ah!" he exclaimed with a gesture of disgust, pushing her from him. "Duped once, but never again!"

She made a feeble effort to rise to crawl towards him.

"No lies," he snarled. "The insult," with sneering emphasis, "has been avenged." He took a paper from his bosom, talking nervously the while. "You thought you were safe. You trusted in his skill with the pistol. I had faith, for I was armed with the right. Listen to me," shaking her savagely by the arm. "I will not detain you long. He agreed to the duel.

"We each made out a statement that we were tired of life and wanted to end it by suicide. This paper was to be found on the body of the one who fell in order to quiet suspicion. I shot him dead. What! are you going to faint? There, there, I shall be through in a minute. This letter I found in his bosom. It was addressed to you. The bullet had passed through it, stamping it with a crimson seal. Look at it; kiss it," thrusting the paper into her face with a ferocious gesture; "kiss it, woman! it is red with his blood. I have read it. It is a touching epistle. He asks you to come to him, for you are free!"

"Arthur!"

"Yes, free! I tell you so. Go to him; he has called for you from the dead. Go!"

And he went down the stairs with that terrible laugh on his lips.

Ernest Pierson.

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One Good Turn.

At the age of twenty-two Celia Newman married Hamilton Ross for love.

She was at that time one of the prettiest girls in London. Not only that, but she belonged to very good family.

She was a flower that had retained its poetic delicacy in the fashionable life of a great city.

When she married Hamilton Ross, people were not surprised. She was not the girl to think of money. She loved him for himself, and that he was only an upright, simple, gentlemanly fellow, with a clerk's salary of £150 a year did not cause her any uneasiness or apprehension for the future.

That was seven years ago. In those seven years the hardships of life had settled down upon and almost crushed the Ross's. The £150 had only increased slightly, but the little Ross family had multiplied rapidly. When at night Celia dragged her tired feet upstairs to bed there were two little golden heads in the nursery cribs, and one in the cradle in her own room to bend over in silent good-night.

Though Hamilton Ross was the best fellow in the world, as good as gold and as honest as the sun, he did not seem to possess the inestimable quality of "being able to get on."

His wife's people hid what disappointment they felt and tried to make the best of things, for they were gentlefolk, with traditions behind them. Unfortunately, they were not wealthy enough to be of any material assistance to Celia.

Very comfortable themselves, in a completeness of luxury that their income just sufficed to produce, they looked on at their kinswoman's struggle with poverty, and saw her beauty, her gaiety her sweet serenity of soul, wearing gradually away.

These were small matters to Celia. Her love for her children, her concern for their welfare, engrossed her to the exclusion of all personal disappointments and chagrins. Poverty for herself and Hamilton would have been a thing to meet with a challenging smile; for her children, it was a misfortune to be averted at any cost. She thought of them growing up ill-educated and ill-clad, and she became frantic at her helplessness.

It was for their sake that she strove to keep in touch with the rich and fashionable society of her girlhood.

Here she was always welcome, for even poverty and an unfortunate marriage could not diminish the prestige of her family. The wealthy friends of her *beaux jours* were the means by which she hoped to raise her children into comfort.

Maternity had transformed the sensitive and dreamy young girl into a shrewd and calculating woman.

Her first step towards better circumstances was an unconscious one, the result of her kindly nature. She was at Mrs. Priestley's reception one afternoon, when she was surprised to see Mrs. Hilary there. The latter lady was of decidedly obscure origin, and in spite of her wealth and good bearing, she had never been able to obtain the entrance to society that she coveted. How she came to be one among that exclusive set, nobody knew; it was due to some great blunder, Mrs. Priestley afterwards explained to her outraged friends.

Everyone ignored her, and she was hesitating whether to retire or stay and face it out when Mrs. Ross forgot the traditions of her family and entered into conversation with her.

The ladies accepted this move on the part of Mrs. Ross with cool but refreshing incredulity, and one or two went home. Mrs. Hilary, in her upright, tightly-laced magnificence, breathing heavily under her green velvet carriage wrap, her card-case trembling in her large white-gloved hand, fronted the scene with a countenance of flushed but stolid immobility, and responded with admirable *áplomb* to Mrs. Ross's mild conversational attempts.

When she rose to go she had regained full possession of herself. She swept past the crowd of chattering ladies whose faces immediately became as stony as if Mrs. Hilary had been Medusa, with a bow fully as distant and haughty as theirs. But to Mrs. Ross she stretched out one of the white-gloved hands in a burst of irrepres

sible gratitude and strained her little fingers in a tremulous, eloquent pressure.

Driving home in her splendid carriage, Mrs. Hilary's anger died down very quickly.

She was an eminently good-natured woman, and one can become used to anything. Mrs. Hilary had passed unscathed through many such ordeals, and she was full of energy to pass through many more, if by so doing she could reach the summit of her ambitions, her one unrealised ambition—a position in society.

It was a hard struggle against prejudice, but she would succeed eventually; it was only a question of time. Patience, and seize all opportunities!

But the happy day when Mrs. Hilary would walk unchallenged into the citadel seemed as far off as ever.

She was one of those women against whom the prejudice of society becomes deeply rooted. She was a trifle too aggressive in her imperious, impressive, style. The magnificence of her surroundings and belongings was theatrical. Moreover, she was known to be resolute and daring. Might not this commanding outsider, once inside the jealously-guarded gates, wrench the sceptre from the rightful ruler's hand?

And so this Peri knocked and knocked at the gate of Eden, with no response. In vain did she organise fêtes and bazaars, and patronise worthy charities. Her contributions were accepted but she was not.

Mr. Hilary, who was exceedingly fond and proud of her, and felt bitter at the isolation of her position, gave her free access to his fortune and full permission to spend it as she thought best. She entertained lavishly, but, unfortunately never could induce any but the employés of her husband. (Mr Hilary was the proprietor of the great Hilary Iron works), to attend her entertainments.

The treatment she had received that day at Mrs. Priestley's reception was sufficient to show her how far she still was from the fulfillment of her dreams. Being alone that evening—the children had gone to a party at a house to which their mother was never invited—she described the scene to her husband as they sat over the last course of their long and luxurious dinner.

Mr. Hilary received the recital in silence. He was mute with discouragement and anger, for he truly loved his wife, and her cheerful and courageous acceptance of the innumerable slights and covert insults directed toward her had strengthened his love for her. Mr. Hilary, in the wild scramble of his fight for money, had been rubbed so close against the seamy side of life that his respect for most things had been quite rubbed off. Personal bravery was the one human attribute to which he was ready to make a passing obeisance, and it struck him that his wife possessed more of it than any one else he knew.

To-night he more than ever admired her uncomplaining admission of the prejudice existing against her, which she did not feebly deplore, but was quietly determined to forcibly override. But when she came to the part of her story which dealt with Mrs. Ross a mist of tears quenched the fire in her dark, bold eyes.

Mrs. Hilary had been slighted so often that the slight had lost its sting, but, for the first time since the distant days of her childhood, she had met with a friendly glance, a mute expression of generous sympathy, from a good woman.

Mr. Hilary did not immediately respond. He, too, was moved more deeply than he liked to show, even to his admired consort. He felt that he would like to go out and buy Mrs. Ross a diamond necklace, and place a thousand pounds to Hamilton Ross's credit in the bank.

He said, however, tracting the buxom outlines of the shepherdess with the tip of his spoon:

"They're very badly off, I've heard. He's in a firm in the city, and he hasn't got enough brains to stop a keyhole with, they say. He's hardly able to get enough to get his wife and children food enough to eat, and clothes to wear."

Mrs. Hilary, who was one of those ladies who knows all about everybody, especially the people who won't know them, gave him a spirited account of the poor circumstances of the Ross's.

"That poor girl," she said in conclusion, "who used to be such a beauty, was in rags—literally in rags. She was like Cinderella among all those staring peacocks."

"It might be possible," mused the husband, "to do something for them. I wouldn't mind giving them a hand; the only trouble is, they possibly wouldn't take it. He's a decent sort of fellow, and after the way she acted to-day, I'd in some way or other like to help them along a little."

He leaned back with his head on one side. His wife's eyes were upon him in a steady stare which was more absent-minded than exploring.

"If you helped her," she said slowly, "she might help me."

"How?" Mr. Hilary forgot the shepherdess and looked at his wife.

"Why," said that astute lady, "if you put it in their way to better their circumstances, in return might not she put it in my way to better mine?"

"Yes, she might, but she wouldn't. Those Newmans are all the same. Poor or rich, they think they're above everybody. You wouldn't get her to recognise you—not if you gave her the earth."

"It would be hopeless if she was Miss Newman still. But she's Mrs. Hamilton Ross, with three children and hardly enough money to feed and clothe them properly. She's fond of her children, and she will do anything to help them on. It's children that make tigers of some women and angels of others, just according to the way they stand. If I hadn't had children I mightn't have been so anxious to get a position."

"You think that if I help Hamilton Ross to a good position his wife will help you into society?" asked her husband.

"She will if she understands that my entrance into society is the price of her husband being put into some good position in the Hilary Iron Works, where he will get a salary upon which he can live like a Christian."

"It would be possible," said Mr. Hilary, thoughtfully, "to find a berth for him in the works. Johnson could squeeze him in somewhere, give him a nominal position with a big name; and he's a hard-working, honest fellow. We haven't got too much of that sort of thing in the Works now. We might in time find him quite useful."

"You might find you'd entertained an angel unawares," said his wife with a little laugh; "honest men don't grow on every bush. On the other hand, if Mrs. Ross would take me up, or even allow me to take her up, there would not be any more trouble about my position. By the end of the season there would be hardly a house in town where I was not received. These fashionable women are not so very remarkable, after all. They follow each other like sheep. Hilary, will you do it?"

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The query was only a polite formula which Mrs. Hilary's instinctively amiable nature prompted her to make. Her husband, in such a matter, was entirely at her command.

"Whenever you please," he said: "but as to its success, I'm not so sure."

"Oh, one must make ventures in this world," she said, lightly. "You've made them in your business, and generally won; I've made them in society, and generally lost; but this time I'm going to win. Make your plans for approaching Ross, and do it very slowly and carefully, and at the end just let him see—delicately—what the price is. Leave his wife to me. She will have prepared him long before you get that far."

The sudden irruption into the room by the children, jubilant from their party, put an end to further conversation.

In the course of the next ten days, a damsel sauntering up the street where Mrs. Hilary's residence was situated saw so astonishing a sight that she stopped short in her listless peregrination. Slowly ascending the sweep of steps that spread so grandly down from the great portico was Mrs. Ross, arrayed in her meagre best, a card-case in her hand.

The watcher loitered by with as serene an air of indifference as her curiosity would permit, and saw the visitor, after a second's parley with a butler, disappear between the wide portals.

Not two weeks after that some members of Mrs. Ross's own grand family were electrified to see drawn up in front of her humble door the handsome carriage of the newest build and style which the initiated knew to be the latest addition to Mrs. Hilary's well-appointed stables. The curiosity aroused by this spectacle overcame even that high-bred and chilly exclusiveness which had always distinguished the Newman character.

The ladies resolved to drop in upon their relative and surprise her, and entered her little drawing-room with an air of ingenuous, artless friendliness, but with the restlessly roaming glances of alert curiosity. There, among the worn down cushions, sat Mrs. Hilary, not in the least abashed; indeed, a keen eye might have detected something of suave triumph in her manner.

Undoubtedly she was very imposing; her self-possession was admirable, and as she rose to go—a regal figure in her glistening clothes of the latest and most gorgeous fashion—she seemed to fill the little faded room and almost crush the elegant occupants back against the wall.

What explanation Mrs. Ross offered to her amazed relations who shall say? That they went out and among themselves and their intimates expressed a surprise which struck the outside world as singularly temperate, is matter of history.

The damsel who had seen Mrs. Ross ascending the steps of the Hilary mansion hied her on her way and described that strange spectacle to all whom she knew.

Startling rumours began to circulate about Mrs. Ross's sudden acquaintance with Mrs. Hilary. People were denying this emphatically, when a paragraph in one of the papers ended all doubt.

The paragraph gave an account of a sumptuous dinner recently given by Mrs. Hilary, and there, first in the list of guests stood the names of Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton Ross and some of the Newmans.

Many intimate friends dropped in to see Mrs. Ross the next afternoon. They all wanted to know what convulsion of nature had taken place to so alter the Newman horizon. The lady parried every query with a cool unconcern which repulsed the most daringly curious. What the comments of these disturbed spirits were when two weeks later they learned through the efforts of a diligent press that the most seclusive member of the Newman family had entertained Mr. and Mrs. Hilary at "a choice dinner of the most *recherché* elegance" shall not be told in mere print. Moreover, the great and last move in the mysterious game was about to be played.

One morning the local world—fashionable, commercial and professional—had its eye arrested as it travelled slowly down the columns of its morning paper by a small paragraph. It was short and not sensational, yet the reading eye stopped at it even more quickly than at the murder above or the marriage beneath.

It merely stated without circumlocution that Hamilton Ross, formerly of the Universal Insurance Agency, had left his old employers to take the position of assistant general manager in the Hilary Iron Works.

Mrs. Hilary's prophecy came true; the fashionable world began to think that it had been wrong, and that there was really nothing against Mrs. Hilary after all. Later, when the Ross family moved to more spacious quarters, and Mrs. Ross gave a reception—at which she verbally announced Mrs. Hilary would be present—her invitations were freely accepted.

And before the end of the season the Peri had gained full admission to her coveted Eden.

Trissy Martin.

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The Sons of Père Beaujeon.

A STORY FOUNDED UPON FACT.

THE fatal day had come at last. A day long feared and dreaded by poor old Beaujeon and his wife. Their two sons, the prop and comfort of their old age, had been summoned by the inexorable military law, which spares neither rich nor poor, neither strong nor weak—that cruel military law which robs the widow of her only child, drags the labourer from his plough, disdains not even the ailing and diseased, and is at once the scourge and the curse of fair France, groaning under a burden which eats into the very vitals of her being.

Pierre, the great muscular Pierre, and Jules, the delicate dreamy boy, were to be taken, to serve perchance under the torrid skies of an African desert, or in the pestilential swamps of Tonquin. At that very moment they were drawing lots. The *tirage* was in full swing, and the picturesque Normandy village of Arques was all agog with excitement. But in the trim little cottage covered with jessamine and westeria, an aged couple were filled with gloomy thoughts.

"Père" Beaujeon (as he was affectionately termed by the village) did indeed make a courageous effort to revive those feeling of youthful ardour and enthusiasm, which stood him in such good stead in earlier days when fighting the Kabyles at Sidi-bel-Abès. He strove to conjure the fierce passion of that bloody afternoon when the chasseurs, surrounded by crowds of Arab horsemen, hewed their way through the living mass, and after all was over, when Captain Le Chatellier, himself bespattered with blood, had singled him out with the ringing words: "*Tu es un brave!*" Père Beaujeon looked down at the cross which never left his breast, and tried to live his battles over again; but it was a sorry failure. Every now and then he would glance across at his wife's tear-stained face, and heave an involuntary sigh.

Presently he threw his pipe aside with an impatient gesture, laid his hard and knotted hand upon her knees, and said:

"It is the will of God, my dear. It is hard, eh! *oui*, it is hard, but it is the will of God."

"The will of God," she repeated slowly, with sorrowful emphasis, "yes, always—the will of God!"

Père Beaujeon was greatly moved, and, rising with difficulty, for the rheumatics had been troublesome of late, he shuffled off towards the window.

The shouts of the newly-enrolled conscripts echoed down the village street. The *tirage* was over, and scattered groups of young men passed by, singing the "Marseillaise," and appearing, or striving to appear, highly pleased with themselves and with the *regime* under which they lived. There were sullen looks among the crowd for all that, and many a sorrowful woman's face.

Old Beaujeon had eyes but for two forms. He had not long to wait. Two young men separated themselves from the noisy throng and made for the cottage. When his sons entered, the old man turned slowly round and faced them; he said nothing, but gripped the window-ledge tightly. His wife had risen, and fixed a strained, anxious glance upon the newcomers.

"*Eh bien! père, mère*, good news! good news!" they cried together. "We are both in the 27th Line, stationed at Lyons. Both in the same regiment! Think of it! Just think of it!"

This was, indeed, grand news—far, far better than anyone of them had expected, and under its happy influence Père Beaujeon and his wife visibly brightened. The old father revived sufficiently to even chaff his sons upon the humdrum life they would be compelled to lead.

"Ha, ha," he exclaimed jokingly, "*mes gosses*, you will have a miserable tame time of it. If you had been ordered to Algeria now—there would have been some fun, if ——"

Old Beaujeon paused. He had caught his wife's eye; in it was a mild reproach, and he collapsed, feeling rather ashamed of himself.

Pierre and Jules were to start the next morning, and the evening was spent in various preparations, the old folk ransacking every hole and corner which might bring to light something of use to their beloved sons. That evening, before going to rest, the family knelt for a few moments in silent and solemn prayer.

Why harp upon the bitterness of the parting! A last long strain to a heaving breast, a last quivering imprint of loving lips, and for old Beaujeon and his wife, all the glory had departed from the sunshine, all the brightness from their lonely hearth.

* * * * * *

No two young men could have been more dissimilar, both in character and physique, than Pierre and Jules Beaujeon.

Pierre was dark and handsome, of medium height, and more than usual chest development—a strong, sturdy, active youth, on whose bronzed and manly features determination was writ large.

Jules, who stood somewhat taller than his elder brother, was of exceeding slightness. His face and form were refined, almost to effeminacy. A dreamy, delicate boy, with a singular sweetness of disposition, he seemed to possess an inner life of his own, a spiritual life which no one could understand, not even his brother, to whom he was passionately devoted. A love passing the love of woman existed between these two. At home it had been the wonder and admiration of the whole village. Among the soldiery it was regarded with respect and a rough but kindly sympathy.

This love had always existed between them, and as they grew into manhood it increased tenfold. It was a touching sight to see the chivalry of Pierre for his weaker brother, and the intense pride which Jules took in Pierre's feats of strength and resolute will.

Jules was utterly unfitted for a soldier's life. This became painfully apparent after a few weeks in the barracks at Lynn. The arduous drill and wearisome marches along dusty roads in a hot sun exhausted him, and at the end of a day's work he was utterly worn out, and often barely able to stand. But he would not give in; if his body was weak, his spirit, at any rate, was high, and he held out manfully. To Pierre's entreaties

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that he would apply for leave to enter the sick ward, he invariably replied:

"What would they think of me at home, giving in at the end of six weeks! No, no, I shall get into it very soon. Besides, I am not ill, I am only tired."

But the weeks grew into months, and Jules did not "get into it." Indeed, he became much worse. His health was now visibly impaired. He had no longer any appetite for the coarse mess of repulsive stew, which is the daily food of the French soldier. Twice recently, in the course of long, trying marches, under a glaring sun, he had reeled faint and dizzy from the ranks. Pierre was seriously alarmed.

Every *sou* he received from the two old people he expended in delicacies for his brother, which he forced the latter to accept, much against his will. More he could not do. But what made matters worse and almost drove Pierre frantic, was the systematic cruelty manifested towards his brother on every possible occasion by a certain *sous-officier*, by name Bostiche. Corporal Bostiche was a brutal, coarse, and ignorant bully. To these estimable qualities he added an overweening vanity which his personal appearance was far from justifying. Stumpy and stout, with bloated complexion and awkward gait, Bostiche resembled a wine-bibbing carter rather than a soldier.

He had taken an intense dislike to Jules from the very first. No one knew exactly why. Perhaps it was the delicacy and refinement of a nature which jarred upon his own bestial conceptions of existence; perhaps it was the physical debility which he despised in the young recruit. Whatever the reason, Corporal Bostiche, by repeated acts of petty tyranny, admirably succeeded in making Jules' daily life a perfect hell upon earth.

The system unhappily prevalent in the French army gives undue latitude to creatures of the Bostiche type, and many a young soldier has been goaded to desperate breaches of discipline—so fearfully and swiftly punished—by men of that class, who are, alas! very numerous.

In the *caserne* (barracks) and out of it, on parade, at drill, and on the march, Bostiche took every possible opportunity of displaying his remarkable powers of persecution. Gratuitous insult mingled with torrents of foul abuse were Jules' habitual experiences. He bore it all with a patient resignation, a dignified silence, which was nothing short of marvellous; but he pined and drooped and grew frailer as the months rolled on.

One day, after a particularly wearisome march, when the men were lounging on the wooden benches in the mess room, Corporal Bostiche suddenly made his appearance.

"Jules Beaujeon," he called out.

Jules advanced and saluted. "*Me voilà, mon Caporal.*"

Corporal Bostiche surveyed the young soldier standing before him, with the tired and hopeless look in the grey eyes and white drawn face. His gaze travelled up and down the weary emaciated form until it finally concentrated itself on Jules' boots, one of which had split during the march and showed a glimpse of white sock from the aperture.

The Corporal curled his lips into an ugly sneer. "*Ah fainéant,*" he exclaimed, "is that the way you attend to your dress? Pig, lout that you are. You disgrace the army, you half-bred worm, you miserable cur, you ——" And so the foul insults came hurling through the air until Bostiche was out of breath. At last he shook his fist in Jules' face, and screaming out, "Three hours in the yard at once, *au complet*," left the room spluttering and cursing as he went. The attack and the reprimand were equally unjustifiable; nevertheless, Jules had to tramp round the barrack yard fully accoutred and shouldering his heavy musket for three mortal hours. When relieved, he was done up and fell fainting upon his knees.

Pierre was on sentry duty at the time and did not see his brother fall, but a kind comrade helped Jules upstairs to the sick ward, where he remained for two days.

When he came out, the animosity of Corporal Bostiche was more virulent than ever, and this combined with the natural hardships of a French soldier's life was killing Jules by inches.

Pierre saw it, and writhed in misery and impotent rage. Finally, tortured by anxiety, he took a step which he afterwards bitterly regretted. He sought out the regimental surgeon, told him everything, and asked him to see Jules, and report the matter to the captain. But the surgeon was a weak and foolish man brimming over with the exaggerated red-tapeism and love of punctilio, which is one of the characteristic ingredients of the French military school.

Pierre's impassioned appeal jarred upon the caste prejudices in which he had been reared, and which insist that rightly or wrongly the superior officer must never be held to blame. He contented himself by a cursory examination of Jules, refused against the secret dictates of his own conscience to admit the gravity of the case, and when next he happened to meet the captain, remarked scoffingly that nowadays *piou-pious* seemed made of poor stuff. This remark elicited a query from the captain, and resulted in the surgeon repeating Pierre's complaints against Bostiche. The Captain, though not hard-hearted, naturally was a bit of a martinet, and always set his face against complaints of that kind on principle. He was as tough as a piece of whipcord himself and held weaklings in profound contempt.

The Surgeon's story, flippantly told, went in at one of the gallant captain's ears and went out at the other. Somehow Bostiche got to hear of Pierre's action, and became convulsed with rage. He would willingly have laid open Pierre's cheek—as he had been known to do to a conscript before—with the cane he was wont to flourish on the drill ground. But there was that in Pierre's eyes which suggested prudence. To put it plainly, Bostiche, who, like all bullies, was a coward, held Pierre in some awe, so he let the elder brother alone, and turned the concentrated essence of his vindictiveness upon the unfortunate Jules.

His brutalities to Jules now were such that on several occasions loud murmurs had arisen from the ranks, which only infuriated Bostiche the more. Jules life had become unbearable. A hollow cough racked his wasted frame, a hectic flush burned in each hollow cheek. Jules was dying and he knew it, and went on his way uncomplaining, lest he should sadden his brother.

Pierre knew it too, and the knowledge filled him with an agony of rage and horror. It filled him with something else, an overmastering desire to kill his corporal. Struggle as he would, he could not rid himself of the idea which haunted him by day and by night.

Ah! if only the six months were over, the six months which remained before the expiration of their term of service. If only Jules could hold out until then, with the love and attention he would get at home, he might yet recover. But could he? And meantime, mean-

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time . . . . Pierre groaned aloud. He was so helpless—so helpless, cruelly helpless—and he had to disguise the real facts of the case from the old people at home. Jules wished it, and, even if they had known, they could have done nothing.

Alas! old Beaujeon and his wife were never destined to see their sons again in this world.

One day the crisis came.

A section of men were doing bayonet exercise on the fortifications behind the barracks. It was a close, oppressive morning; the air seemed charged with electricity; and Pierre, who happened to be next his brother in the ranks, observing him anxiously, saw that he looked ghastly in the extreme.

"What is it?" whispered Pierre. "What ails you?"

Jules did not reply. He appeared dazed, and went through the exercises in a mechanical way.

"*Portez armes!*" shouted Bostiche, preparatory to dismissing the men.

Jules took no notice, and continued to feebly thrust and parry, looking straight before him with dull and meaningless eyes. Bostiche grew purple with anger.

"*Sacripant!*" he yelled, but got no further, for at that moment a strange gurgling sound came from Jules' throat, a bloody froth rose to his lips, and he fell forward upon his face. Pierre darted from the ranks, and hardly knowing what he was about, stooped and half raised his brother from the ground. Jules' arms lolled helplessly apart, his eyes stared into vacancy. . . . His martyrdom was over.

"Eh; get up then, *espèce d'animal*," cried Bostiche with a horrible oath as he hurried forward cane in hand intent upon some fresh deed of tyranny.

They were the last words the corporal ever spoke. Pierre laid his brother's body reverently down, then sprang to his feet, and uttering a loud cry, before anyone could move a finger to stay him, lifted his rifle with its fixed bayonet high above his head, and with one mighty sickening thrust sent the bright blade crashing through the body of his brother's tormentor.

Bostiche flung up his arms and fell dead without a groan.

* * * * *

Two hours afterwards, a rattle of musketry might have been heard behind the barracks. The military laws of France are inflexible, and short shift is given to offenders. Pierre had paid the penalty of his action. Who will dare call it a crime?

* * * * *

Père Beaujeon hummed softly to himself as he made his way towards the house of the Garde Champêtre, which lay just outside Arques village, beyond the railway cutting. Only a short time remained now before Pierre and Jules would be back once more. What joy! The strings of his stout old heart fairly vibrated at the thought of it, and a tear rolled slowly down the ridge of his nose, just stopping at the tip, where it hung for an instant, sparkling in the sun like a dewdrop. His *bons gosses*. How their mother would rejoice.

Full of these pleasurable anticipations, old Beaujeon reached the house of the Garde Champêtre, where he found several other leading lights of the village, all bent upon discussing the same question, viz., the depredation of the wild boars in the potato fields, and the best way of protecting the crop from their ravages. It was an important topic for the inhabitants of Arques, and long and animated was the talk. At length the meeting broke up, and all wended their way to their respective homes and breakfasts.

The Garde Champêtre, a worthy and kind-hearted soul, accompanied old Beaujeon part of the way home. General Boulanger's exploits were then the universal theme of conversation, and the papers were eagerly bought up. Presently the postman, who had just finished delivering his mails in the village, hove in sight, and, touching his hat respectfully to old Beaujeon, informed him that his paper had been handed to *la bonne mère*.

"Well, well, *au revoir donc*," exclaimed old Beaujeon to his companion; "I leave you to your papers, and I go to mine. Perhaps there will be news of my boy's doings. *Qui sait?*"

The two men parted with a cordial grip. The Garde Champêtre had an immense admiration for old Beaujeon. When he got home, he untied his bundle of papers and leisurely scanned their contents. His eyes became riveted upon a heading in large black type, which stood out from the sheet and looked portentious of evil. He read a few lines, uttered an exclamation of utter dismay, and fell into a chair.

Meanwhile, Père Beaujeon walked slowly up the street to his own dwelling, pushed up the latch, and entered.

His wife was seated in an armchair in front of the fireplace, her head bowed upon her breast, an open paper upon her knees.

"Eh, eh, you old politician!" chuckled Père Beaujeon, in high good humour. "What has the *brav' général* been up to now?"

His wife did not answer.

Startled by her silence and immobility, the old man shuffled rapidly across the room. "What is it, *ma Mie?*" he asked anxiously. There was no answer. "Asleep," he murmured; "is it possible?"

Fearful of waking her he bent low, peering into her face partially concealed in the shadow of a linen cap. A curious sound between a gasp and a groan escaped him. He placed his trembling fingers beneath her chin and lifted her face to the light. It was set in the rigidity of death.

Old Beaujeon staggered back. Every vestige of colour had left his face, and his body swayed slowly from side to side.

Presently the newspaper caught his eye. He took it up. In the middle of the sheet, printed in huge characters, he read this:

TERRIBLE TRAGEDY AT LYON BARRACKS
A SOLDIER KILLS HIS CORPORAL
EXECUTION OF THE ASSASSIN.

Slowly his eyes travelled down the column, and up again to the next, until the end was reached. He did not miss a single word.

When he had finished he laid the paper quietly down, looked out at the bright sun streaming in through the window, and then at his dead wife in her chair. His face had gone strangely rigid, and there was a curious blue look about his lips.

Suddenly, he burst into a shout of discordant laughter, a long, loud, hideous peal, and, as the door opened admitting the Garde Champêtre with the acutest sorrow written upon his countenance, Père Beaujeon with the laugh still upon his lips, came crashing to the ground, like some noble oak, felled by the axe of the woodman.

Edmund D. Morel.

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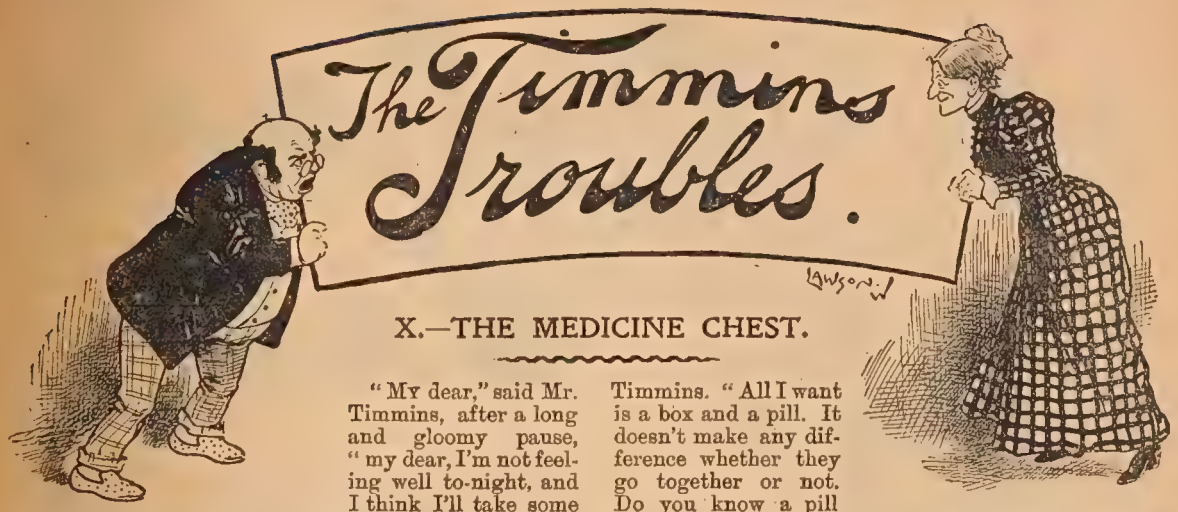

X.—THE MEDICINE CHEST.

"My dear," said Mr. Timmins, after a long and gloomy pause, "my dear, I'm not feeling well to-night, and I think I'll take some of those anti-bilious pills. That idea of yours of having a little medicine chest, with everything handy, is an excellent one, and if you can find those pills I'll take a dose."

"They are just what you need?" said Mrs. Timmins, sympathetically; "your tongue is coated and your complexion looks very yellow lately."

"I don't remember calling on you for any remarks about my complexion, Mrs. Timmins, and as for my tongue being coated, we will assume that it has also got on vest, trousers, and boots. What I asked for was pills, pills, Mrs. Timmins, not oratory."

Mrs. Timmins bustled to the cupboard, and after considerable search, found a ribbon box with one end knocked out. In it were half a dozen blue papers that belonged to the large end of a seidlitz powder, a dose and a half of cough mixture, a paper of salts, an empty arnica bottle, two lumps of sugar, four biscuits, half a lemon, a lump of camphor, a mustard leaf, and seven pill boxes without covers.

"I don't think these are the pills you want," said Mrs. Timmins, scratching in the bottom of the medicine chest. "Do you remember whether they were white, brown, or black?"

"I'm not particular about the colour," responded Mr. Timmins sardonically. "What I want is anti-bilious pills. I brought home a box and told you to put 'em away carefully. If you've lost them in that box, it isn't my fault. What I want is pills—anti-bilious pills!"

"This looks like them," said Mrs. Timmins, squashing one between her thumb aud finger, and smelling it cautiously. "Do you remember whether they were sugar-coated?"

"I do not," rejoined Mr. Timmins, "nor do I remember whether they wore stand-up collars or a top-hat. If you think I'm going to sit here like a book on heraldry, and furnish you with the antecedents of those pills, you've lost sight of our relations, Mrs. Timmins. I want to know whether you can find them or not."

"Is this one of them?" asked Mrs. Timmins, chasing a refractory pellet into a corner, and fishing it out with some misgivings. "It looks like it, and I can't think what else it's for. Suppose you take it."

"Does it say so on the cover? Does the cover say it's anti-bilious?"

"I can't find the cover," responded Mrs. Timmins helplessly. "Here's a box, will that do?"

"Oh, certainly, anything'll do for me!" shrieked Mr. Timmins. "All I want is a box and a pill. It doesn't make any difference whether they go together or not. Do you know a pill from a post-office? Can you tell the difference between a pill-box and a policeman? D'you suppose I'm going to eat one of those things without knowing whether it's a railway ticket or a corn plaster? What did ye mix 'em up for? D'you think I'm going to speculate in those pills till one hits my liver, or to take 'em in courses like a City banquet? Have I got to get out a search warrant to find those pills?"

"Suppose you put on this mustard leaf," suggested Mrs. Timmins, holding it up before him. "Mustard is the best thing in the world to excite action of the liver."

"Oh, yes, certainly, certainly," sneered Mr. Timmins. "What a head you've got for physic! If I could get you to hold a red light in your mouth and tie a pestle and mortar round your neck I'd start you for a chemist's shop. How are you going to tie a mustard plaster round my liver? Don't you know the difference between a mustard leaf and a box of pills? What did you spill 'em for? D'you think I'm going to eat mixed pills like sweets? Been trying to make a pill salad haven't you?"

"Let me think," said Mrs. Timmins, musingly. "These white ones are quinine; these brown ones are the opium; now I remember, and the black ones are the ones you want. How many make a dose?"

"None!" yelled Mr. Timmins. "D'you suppose I'm going to take those things on their colour? Think I'm going to run the chances of filling myself up with opium, just to test your eye for tints? or shut my eyes and draw a pill, as if I was playing a game of forfeits? I don't want any pills. Throw 'em out! Pitch that medicine chest out of the window! Next time I want pills, I'll——"

Mrs. Timmins went to the cupboard, put the chest away, and as she did so noticed a little box that had fallen out on the shelf.

"Here they are, dear," she said smiling, and pointing out the label to her liege.

"Oh, yes, of course!" growled Mr. Timmins, "you found 'em, didn't you? Couldn't give 'em to me at first, could you? Another time Mrs. Timmins, I want you to let things alone. Don't ever put anything more of mine in that chest; you hear me? I don't want those things to-night, because I'm not sure whether I'm billious, but when I am I want these pills where I can find 'em; you understand?"

THE FINAL WAR

BY

LOUIS TRACY.

Author of "The Shadow Hand," "An American Emperor," "The Lost Provinces," etc.

CHAPTER LIII. (*continued*).

"STILL, it's a very old church and not a very convenient one," continued the other. "As some compensation Lord Roberts has decided to apportion the Champs Elysées into building lots, of which the rents will go entire to the French treasury."

M. Trochu looked up, and there was a wild madness in his eyes.

"I am very sorry to distress you, sir," said the Englishman gently. "I will say no more. Pray pardon me."

"No, no—the trut, the whole fatal trut—conceal nothing. Oh, *mon Dieu*, let me know ze worst!"

"I really don't think there's anything else, unless—no, stay, it is said that the Vendôme Column will be set up on the Thames Embankment, and that the British government have not quite decided whether they will erect the Arc de Triomphe in Hyde Park or in Waterloo Place."

It was too much, and the poor Frenchman, overcome, heedless of comment, and consumed with the overwhelming sense of his country's shame, broke down, great tears coursing one another down his cheeks.

Seeing this, the other Englishman interposed.

"Pardon my friend," he said, "he cannot resist a jest. All this is pure invention. Paris, the beautiful, the mother of cities, is safe, be assured, from English spoilation. And permit me, sir, to drink to the gallantry and chivalry of the great nation whom it is England's fortune to have beaten."

A marvellous change came over the Frenchman's face. He raised his glass unsteadily, drank to his tormentors and hastily left the place.

Next morning there appeared in one of the daily papers a poem from the pen of the Poet Laureate, who on this occasion at last succeeded in proving that he could leave the turgid and the commonplace, and adopt a note of sincerity and feeling. Part of it ran thus:

O England, tender mother of the fallen.
O England, scourge of tyranny and wrong,
Thy head is raised imperious 'midst the nations,
Thy step is measured to the victor's song!

For, England, though art consecrate to Freedom,
With all the passion of a zealot's vow.
The flower of Fity blossometh in thy bosom,
The star of Victory is on thy brow!

Thou whisperest thy secrets to the forests,
They bear them swiftly o'er the conquered sea,
And far-off people slumbering in their thraldom,
Awake to find themselves secure and free.

Upon the bleak and sterile lands thou treadest,
And straight the verdure springeth round thy feet.
Thy touch is magical upon the waters,
Thy hand enchanteth whatsoe'er it meet.

Beloved England, never shall the madness
Of patricidal nations fall on *thee*,
For, O my country, even are thy watchwords
Love, happiness, peace, justice, liberty!

And over all England there was rejoicing. Who shall say whether the commercial splendour of the great cities, with all its prodigality and display, was any more sincere than the bucolic thanksgiving of the rustic, who, bearing in his hands the simple product of the soil he cultured, laid it reverently upon the altar of his village church?

For he, beyond others, had suffered, if not in privations which in his low state could not be endured, at least in the lives of those beloved of him. Many a gallant son, the hope and pride of some poor country farm, lay cold and dead, or mouldered quite away in some far-off land. As of old, the soil of England had yielded up its treasure, and lay smitten beneath the cruel scourge of war.

Yet there was no repining, for these brave men had died not alone to save their country, but by their blood to secure peace for generations yet to come. There was at last finality to man's inhumanity to man. The NEWCASTLE CHRONICLE, in a leading article, observed:

"One thrilling thought remains. The cannon has spoken its last word. In all the savage incoherence of its cruel, inarticulate speech it has roared its ghastly message from century to century, writing its meaning in the writhing bodies of its victims, or tracing it along the blackened ruins of fair cities. For man deceived himself when he laughed at the childish legends of the past. He has always had his fabled monster, the insatiate, gluttonous devourer of his kind, and, with much more readiness than did ever those afflicted people of Crete, yielded up his annual tribute to its maw. But gun and cannon and bayonet and shell are silenced at last. In future ages, when new generations see in their museums these horrid implements, they will indeed wonder that the nineteenth century should have been so self-deluded as to deem itself civilised."

Solemn indeed was the meeting of Parliament when the news that all was over was formally announced in broken utterance by the Leader of the House. There was not one whose heart was not too full for words; but, by due observance, thanks were devoutly offered to Divine Providence, and a brief resolution of congratulation to Her Majesty, as representing in her person the kingdom of Great Britain, was moved and carried in silence.

An early day was set aside for National thanksgiving.

An early day was set aside for national thanksgiving. A chain of bonfires throughout the whole country was so contrived that, upon a signal raised high above the trees on Windsor Hill, all Britain was set aglow with triumphant blaze. Not a village but had its feast, and rich and poor alike joined in the joyous celebration.

But most imposing of all was the service held in St. Paul's Cathedral. Crowded beyond conception were the streets of London to see pass by the illustrious procession. The Queen, with all her family, both Houses of Parliament, the municipal bodies of London, and as many of the scaffoldings that were built upon every available space in the great building, joined in common adoration.

And to this enormous and unique gathering the eloquent Bishop of Ripon preached a touching and powerful sermon.

Dr. Boyd Carpenter is the silver-tongued orator of the Church of England. His is the gift of speech that goes to men's hearts, that appeals alike to intellect and sentiment, that convinces, not only by reason of its fervent sincerity, but its scholarly, well-ordered fluent thoughtfulness.

For this unparalleled occasion he had, with more than ordinary care, prepared an ornate discourse. It was clear and cogent in his mind, and although he felt the gravity of his task he never was more conscious of his powers and, primed with his subject than when he entered the pulpit of St. Paul's on this momentous day.

But as he gazed round upon the assembled multitude an overwhelming sense of awe held him as in a trance. He realised now that which he could not realise in the solitude of his study. It was his duty to give utterance to the first canticle of a new era, to note a fresh departure in the work of human deliverance inaugurated those long centuries ago by the shores of the Sea of Galilee, to proclaim aloud to the people that on the threshold of the twentieth century had been accomplished the destruction of the chief foe of civilisation.

The undertaking appalled him, so he knelt and solemnly asked for guidance and help.

And as he prayed, the whole of his set sermon fled from his memory. But there came to him with thrilling significance the words of Isaiah: "And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury it upheld me. For He said: 'Surely they are my people.'"

Then the Bishop rose to his feet, and taking his text from these ringing verses of the prophet, he delivered an extempore sermon that created a profound sensation among his thousands of hearers, and won world-wide renown when it was read in the newspapers subsequently.

He justified and glorified the action of England and the United States, and he denounced any other course than that which they had taken as forfeiting the birthright which Providence had seen fit to bestow upon them.

Their mission was one of emancipation, and freedom could neither be won nor bestowed until the demon of militarism had been slain in his own den. In such a struggle individual interests must be ignored, and the collective good alone sought.

"Whilst the air yet throbs with the lamentations of the widow and the orphan," said the Bishop, "I hear a grand canticle of thanksgiving, swelling ever louder and more joyous, thundering towards us from the hidden paths of the future. It is the song of praise of generations yet unborn, and in that marvellous diapason the cries of present grief are wholly overborne."

Unfortunately it is impossible to afford more than the merest outline of Dr. Boyd Carpenter's unexampled panegyric of the war and its results. One passage alone may be cited as a specimen of the rest.

"This campaign has often been termed a war of patriotism," he said. "The phrase is well meant, but it does not go far enough. It was, in the widest sense, a war of belief. Once before, within the lives of the elder amongst us, have we seen such a war. Brothers fought with brothers and fathers with sons to determine, by the last dread arbitrament left to man, whether or not slavery should find a place where the English tongue was spoken and the Bible ruled the conduct of men's lives. Heaven has willed it that the victory gained then should be now welded into an eternal principle. Freedom, spoke God through his earthly ministers, shall prevail, and war, the chief agent of the oppressor, shall cease to exist. And this superb achievement was vouchsafed to the English-speaking race, for He said, 'Surely they are my people.'"

Little wonder that a sermon pulsating with tumultuous words like these, which poured on with torrential force for over forty minutes, should have electrified all who heard and all who read.

England surged and swayed with such abounding excitement during the early days after the close of the war, that there was some fear lest the national character should suffer more from the resultant hysteria than from the accumulated strain and burthen of the campaign. The public mind required an anti-climax to bring it back to the calm content of the workaday world, and relief came from a totally unexpected quarter.

Mr. W. S. Penley, the well-known comedian, thinking that people needed some relaxation after the stress of conflict, wrote to the papers to call attention to the fact that "*Charley's Aunt* was still running."

And then everybody laughed, which was a wholesome sign of returning sanity.

CHAPTER LIV.

A Message of Everlasting Peace.

During the early days after the close of the war the attention of the authorities both in England and on the Continent was devoted exclusively towards making complete arrangements for the care of the wounded and providing relief for those who had been rendered homeless and foodless by reason of the campaign.

Mr. W. S. Penley calls attention to his play.

So widespread had been the area covered by hostilities that these tasks were in themselves colossal, and might at any other period of the world's history, not so utterly dominated by a succession of gigantic undertakings, have evoked the astonished plaudits of civilisation.

The fleets of the belligerents, which had so lately carried devastation and ruin to peaceful ports, were now utilised for the more kindly purpose of ferrying ample supplies of food and clothing from the vast stores accumulated in the United

Kingdom to those points on the Continent where distress was most severe. The work of the Government in coping with this final legacy of hunger and misery left by the war was rendered easier by the fact that during the concluding stages of the campaign the ocean had in reality been a British highway.

British and American merchantmen were consequently free to come and go as they chose, and there was not the disruption in the commercial marine which must have eventuated from any other solution of the struggle save that secured by the complete and overwhelming strength of the British navy, admirably amplified as it was by the ships of the United States.

But no sooner had departmental activity been fully concentrated upon this work of succour, than the keen attention of Ministers in England and the United States was given to solving the political and social problem which now confronted all who were responsible for the future safeguarding of the world. The cabinets of St. James' and Washington sat almost continuously, and the cables between England and the United States were wholly monopolised by the long messages which were constantly passing between the chiefs of the two countries.

The very magnitude of the reforms they contemplated brought about an element of ease and clearness in outline. Local and personal considerations, which in a scheme of lesser detail would have proved troublesome in settlement were now necessarily swept completely aside with ruthless vigour. When the future of the world was at stake petty consideration affecting a minor state or an insignificant section of the community could not be entertained.

British and American merchantmen were free to come and go.

As a preliminary measure Lord Salisbury and the American President decided that a Manifesto should be drawn up and signed by the two titular heads of the English-speaking race in order that the principles vindicated and established by the war should be set forth plainly, fearlessly, and unmistakably. Such a document required much care in preparation, and it was felt that if any error were committed in text or significance the lapse should certainly be on the side of simplicity. At last it was approved by both governments and signed by Her Majesty the Queen, and by the President of the United States. It was distributed, in every language, throughout the world, and never before was document so eagerly scanned, so widely discussed or so universally approved. The full text of this remarkable Manifesto was as follows:

"An International Proclamation.

"It has been decreed by Divine Providence that in the War which was recently brought to such a speedy and satisfactory close victory should rest with the arms of England and the United States.

"The victory thus achieved was so signal and complete, and so far-reaching in its consequences, that we cannot refuse to recognise the intent of a greater power than has ever been vouchsafed to any section of the human race.

"This clear expression of the Divine Will can only be interpreted in one way. War, with the countless miseries that come in its train, must forthwith cease, and it is by the medium of the most widespread conflict ever witnessed in the history of the world, that Providence has seen fit in its inscrutable wisdom to make manifest its commands.

"Great Britain and the United States are but the instruments chosen to accomplish the task. To their hands was committed the cause of suffering humanity, and as they did not shrink from their duty in the hour of difficulty and danger, so now they will not draw back from the undertaking until the peace of the world is placed upon a firm and lasting basis. We therefore, acting on behalf of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the United States of America, hereby state our unalterable resolves:

"1st. That disputes between civilised nations shall henceforth be determined by a tribunal of International Arbitration, the constitution and powers of which shall be hereafter decided.

"2nd. That no civilised nation shall be permitted to organise or maintain any naval or military armed force save in such limited degree as may be required for the preservation of law and order within the bounderies of the State. As a necessary consequence, all existing fortifications and accumulated munitions of war shall in due course be dismantled and destroyed.

"3rd. That England and the United States shall equip and maintain a sufficient armed force both by sea and land for the purpose of giving effect to the principles herein enunciated, such armed force being kept in readiness for as long a period as the rulers of those countries shall deem fit and necessary to achieve this object.

"4th. That in the event of any uncivilised state threatening the peace of the world the representatives of Europe and America shall collectively determine and provide the means whereby such danger may be averted or satisfactorily met.

"5th. That an International Congress shall in due course assemble in London, at which the nations of Europe and the great powers of the East shall be represented, to determine the best manner whereby the requirements of this decree shall be brought into operation, the Governments of England and the United States reserving to themselves the right to control and direct the deliberations of such Congress.

"6th. The first duty which shall call for the attention of this International Congress will be the most effective method of securing general disarmament, compatible with considerations of expediency, as vast numbers of armed men must not be thrown too quickly into civil life. The disruption which would ensue to all industrial operations from too great precipitancy in such a step will thus be avoided.

"7th. The Congress shall next devote itself to the consideration of permanent boundaries between States and the adjustment of Colonial areas, with due respect to existing possessions, and the development of unsettled localities adjoining thereto.

"8th. Notwithstanding the unprovoked nature of the attack made upon the United Kingdom, and despite the enormous sacrifices cheerfully borne by the peoples of Great Britain and the United States, it has been resolved that no indemnity shall be claimed from the assailants. We feel that the French, German, and Russian nations, with whom we have no quarrel, were led into this disastrous war by the short-sighted ambition of their rulers, and in refusing to inflict grievous financial burdens upon them in order to pay the entire costs of the struggle we are giving the best possible guarantee of the motive which dominates our action, namely, to secure lasting peace and happiness for the inhabitants of the world.

"9th. There will be no interference with the internal affairs of States, or the methods of government adopted, so long as constitutional means alone are followed for their settlement. But the use of force will not be permitted under any circumstances whatever, save as before stated, for the preservation of law and order at the hands of the properly constituted authorities.

"We humbly pray the blessing of Providence upon our designs, and we trust that the united peoples of Europe will

co-operate with us in the effort to bring them to a successful and irrevocable consummation."

The effect produced on the Continent by this proclamation was stupendous.

Not only did the magnificent scope of the proposals made by the two governments appeal to the imagination of every man who cared for the progress of the human race, and the triumph of collectivism, but the magnanimity of England and America in refusing to fine the other belligerents, evoked the keenest gratitude from the already too heavily taxed agricultural and commercial classes in central Europe.

There was joy that night in the cafes.

Naturally enough, in some quarters there was a disposition to resent the masterful tone adopted by the victors.

But behind the dignified and convincing language of the proclamation there stood the terrific power of those who spoke. It was computed that when Paris fell, no less than twelve millions of Anglo-Saxons were armed for the struggle and cynically prepared to prosecute it to the bitter end.

To those nations of Europe who had not participated in the war the proclamation came first as a thunderbolt. But Austria, and Italy, and Spain, not to mention the less powerful kingdoms of the north, quickly saw that the project afforded relief to them as well as to the stricken peoples of France, Germany, and Russia.

In the Far East China hailed the glad tidings which placed the restless Japanese under the control of a mightier power than hers, and if the rulers of Turkey saw a definite end to a government of rapine and disorder, the oppressed nations of the Levant rejoiced in the certainty that the period of deliverance was at hand.

The German Emperor threw himself with heart and soul into the work of regeneration. He had learnt, by sad experience, that the greatness of Germany depended not upon her militarism but upon the commercial and industrial adaptability of her song and he now devoted his superabundant energies to the mastering of the technical and mechanical details of manufacturing enterprises with as much keenness as he had formerly displayed in qualifying himself to lead armies and fleets into action.

By a stroke of genius M. Bourgeois pacified Paris.

When the proclamation was read in the French Chamber the assembled deputies were dumb with amazement at its extraordinary conclusions.

The Premier was quick to note the excitable feelings under which the House laboured, and he ventured upon an anti-climax which proved to be a greater *coup* than he could have anticipated in his most sanguine moments.

"You have heard the decisions arrived at by England and the United States," he said, speaking with calm deliberation. "To me they seem both reasonable and temperate. But they cannot now be discussed in their entirety. At this moment I would beg to draw the attention of honourable deputies to the fact that if the Paris Exhibition of 1900 is to be as successful as we would desire, not another instant must be lost in pushing forward the too long suspended preparations."

The Premier's suggestion buzzed quickly through the Chamber and thence into the city and the provinces.

Its philosophy was undoubted and acceptable. France had had enough of war. Let her revert to her vastly more pleasing *rôle* as supplying the playground of the world. There was joy that night in the cafés, and hope in the Magasin du Louvre.

In bestowing honours and rewards upon the officers and men of the army and navy who had served the cause of England so well Her Majesty the Queen was called upon to face a task as formidable in extent as it was gratifying in nature.

In the first instance a special message was forwarded through the American President to the Senate and House of Representatives for permission to be accorded to her Majesty to suitably decorate the principal officers of the American army and navy. The required sanction was as cordially given as it was graciously demanded, and in the result Admiral Mahan and General Smithson received the Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath, whilst among other recipients of the Royal Victorian Order figured the name of Colonel W. J. Ritchie.

It was not until the legitimate claims of all the principal American officers had been satisfied that her Majesty preferred to the Government of the United States the most important request of all. This was no less than a most warmly-worded expression of her wish that legislative sanction might be given to the acceptance of the Knighthood of the Garter by the President, the Vice-President, and the Secretary of State for War. Such an unexampled departure from precedent deeply impressed the public mind both in England and across the Atlantic, for even democratic America felt that the prompt acceptance by the House of Representatives of the honour proposed to be conferred upon the chief citizens of the United States was in itself a testimony of the high regard in which the time-honoured and most distinguished institution of the English Court was held by every member of the Anglo-Saxon race.

Nor were Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and other colonies forgotten in the least degree. Not only were their political leaders singled out for marks of royal appreciation, but the British Prime Minister intimated that in due course government grants would be made towards recouping all ports which had suffered loss or damage by reason of unforeseen attacks by the allied fleets.

In dealing with the British army and navy, Her Majesty's advisers were compelled, for obvious reasons, to restrict the range of definite reward. Where every officer and man had so nobly done his duty it was impossible, save in very isolated cases, to select individuals for distinction. Of course, in the case of generals who commanded in the field this restrictive rule was necessarily departed from.

Lord Wolseley's services as Commander-in-Chief of the entire army was recognised by a dukedom, whilst Lord Roberts, Sir George White, and Sir Evelyn Wood each became an earl. A similar honour was bestowed upon Sir Nowell Salmon, Sir Beauchamp Seymour and Sir Edward Freemantle, whilst Lord Charles Beresford became a marquis in his own right.

Springing to his feet he cried: "—

Baronetcies and knighthoods were distributed with a free hand to divisional and fleet commanders, and a bonus of six months' pay was given to every officer and man who had served in the field. A similar donation was bestowed upon the relatives of all who were killed in action or died from disease whilst under arms.

But it was generally felt that the action of the Government in the latter respect, although generous enough in

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view of the tremendous financial responsibilities entailed by the war, did not march with full measure of public sentiment. In England no less than in the United States there was a deep conviction that private generosity should supplement the relief given by the State to soldiers who had been disabled for life by their wounds and to the widows and orphans who had lost their breadwinners owing to the vicissitudes of the campaign.

For some time people were at a loss to know how to reconcile their wishes with reasonable performance, but the question was solved in a curious and eminently satisfactory manner.

The Baroness Burdett-Coutts had given a small and extremely select supper party at her residence, No. 153, Piccadilly. This gathering was destined to become famous in history.

The majority of the guests were millionaires, and, curiously enough, the somewhat limited section of humanity which comprises this fortunate class was represented to an unusually large extent. There were present not only the chief financial magnets of London and South Africa, but it happened that among the guests were four of the richest citizens of the United States.

The conversation during one portion of the proceedings turned upon the need there was for adequate provision being made for the humble sufferers from the war, and the opinion was unanimously expressed that the decision of the Government' although reasonable from the point of view of Ministers responsible for taxation, yet in no way met the urgent demands of maimed men and helpless women and children. The noble and generous minded lady who presided at the table was very emphatic in expressing the view that at such a time the rich should carefully consider the real scope of the obligations imposed upon them by their wealth.

"We ought to realise," she said, "that were it not for the splendid heroism and absolute self-abandonment displayed by even the poorest members of the community, we should not now be in possession of our property under the peaceful security of a strong and impartial Government. We owe all that we have in the world to the men who have given their lives in defence of England, and I, for one, am prepared to mark my sense of what they have done by a donation towards some fund to alleviate the wants of those who are in need, and such donation will, by reason of its amount, be some testimony of the sincerity of my conviction. I may tell you," she continued, looking round at the assembled company, "that I have already given orders for the realisation of securities worth a million sterling, which sum I propose to hand over to such public committee as may be entrusted with the distribution of relief upon the most popular basis."

A hum of admiring appreciation passed round the table, and the excitement grew when Messrs. Barnato Bros. and J. B. Robinson announced their intention of following the precedent established by the philanthropic Baroness.

The Americans present looked at each other with growing eagerness in their faces, and at last Mr. John D. Rockefeller drily remarked to his compatriots: "I think it's about time we raised them a few."

Springing to his feet he cried: "I like your idea, and it ought to go well in the States. Just to give it a shove off I put up two millions."

"Dollars or pounds?" shouted a voice from the end of the table.

"Pounds of course," he replied. "We are not talking silver here to-night."

Thus the friendly rivalry sped, until in that room alone England had contributed eleven millions sterling and America nine millions to the Patriotic Fund which was shortly opened for the benefit of the necessitous.

The Times and the other chief newspapers of the United Kingdom warmly took up the idea, and the country contributed to an unprecedented extent. So fast and furious was the enthusiasm that Parliament itself felt constrained to direct and control the movement. A strong committee of both houses was nominated to join the representatives of the army and navy for the purpose of efficiently administering the fund, and by its effectual distribution a vast amount of misery and privation was averted.

This great work of succour and alleviation progressed steadily and contemporaneously side by side with the orderly progress now being made by the nations of Europe towards political and social regeneration.

By this time the Congress of London met for the purpose of entering upon a solemn, anxious, and protracted consideration of the many important questions raised by the joint proclamation of the Queen and the American President, the evil passions engendered by the war were already becoming quietly extinguished, and truly seemed that the world was at last about to enter upon a period of rest and peace and mutual helpfulness.

(To be concluded next week.)

Maud: "Do you believe that all the world loves a lover?"
Jack: "No; not since I met your father."

Watts: "Seems to have been some trouble over at Wickwire's house."

Potts: "Well, yes. His wife told him to advertise for a parlour maid and he goes and puts in the ad., 'blonde preferred.'"

"We are selling these goods," said the counter-jumper, "at a positive loss. Practically, we are giving them away."

"Then," said the lady with the haughty demeanour, "I, must decline to purchase. I cannot accept gifts from a shopkeeper."

A man who had saved the life of a daughter of a millionaire received 8s. 6d. from the grateful parent. He was so overcome with the magnificent bounty that he paid out every penny of it to seventeen organ grinders to simultaneously serenade his benefactor.

They attach a good deal of importance in American society to titles. On one occasion there was a young English nobleman figuring at Washington. He had not much brains, but a vast number of titles, which, in the eyes of the envious ladies, covered a multitude of sins. Several of them were in debate, going over the list. "He is Lord Viscount so-and-so, Baron of such a country," etc.

"My fair friends," exclaimed the gallant Lieutenant N., "one of his titles you appear to have forgotten."

"Ah," exclaimed they, "what is that?"

"He is Barren of Intellect," was the reply.

The following is a case to which the word "disillusion" might well be applied. Not long ago a servant living in Goole gave notice of her intention to leave, informing her mistress that she was about to be married. As the time drew near she addressed her mistress thus:

"Please, mum, have you got a girl yet?"

"No, Mary, why do you ask?"

"Because if you haven't I should like to stay."

"What? I thought you were going to marry the chimney sweep?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am," replied Mary, hesitating, and blushing a little, "but when I saw him with his face washed I felt I couldn't love him."

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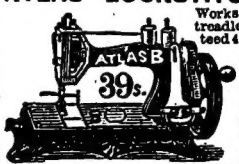

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AIDS TO ACCURACY.

J. D.—An instance of the defacement of coins to insult a monarch occurred in Saxony when that country was conquered by Frederick the Great. He imposed the Prussian coinage upon the vanquished in order to stamp out the last vestige of independence. The Saxons altered the wording on some of the pieces from *Ein Reichs-thalen*, a Royal dollar, to *Ein Reich-sthal*, the stealing of a kingdom. They had to pay dearly for their gibe in the end.

L. E. L.—The first railway in Sweden was opened in 1855.

G.—Frog-hunting is now prohibited by law in Belgium. The Belgian hunters, however, continue their amphibious occupation in Holland, and from the Sas-van-Gent have recently sent in one half-day as many as 20,000 frogs' legs on ice to Paris. These delicacies fetch between from twopence to fourpence apiece, and some of the hunters find the calling very remunerative.

H. M.—The sword of honour recently presented by the Corporation of London to Lord Kitchener, is the forty-third bestowed by that body on naval and military commanders. The first was given to Lord St. Vincent just over a hundred years ago. He had been accorded the freedom of the City, and the Corporation did not know how to do him further honour; someone suggested a sword, and this has become a kind of custom. Lord Alcester (Sir Beauchamp Seymour) was the last to receive a sword of honour.

L. S. D.—There are 40,000 miners at work in the Siberian gold mines. The grains of Siberian gold are, on the average, larger than those found in any other part of the world.

F. B.—It is highly probable that dancing is the oldest form of amusement. Leaping and jumping about is the most natural way of disposing of superfluous energy and of expressing our feelings, as may be observed in children, and the earliest records show that dancing was a common form of amusement. No doubt the early form of it was mere capering about, but this does not affect the question. Many dancers of the present day do nothing more than caper about the ballroom.

H. G.—The greatest amount of booty ever obtained by an army as the result of a single battle was that captured by Nadir Shah at the sack of Delhi, in 1733. Authorities differ as to the exact value of the treasure, which included the famous Koh-i-noor diamond, but the most modest computation is fifteen millions sterling.

A. R. N.—Astronomical instruments of glass were used by the Chinese four thousand years ago. One theory advanced in explanation of the erection of the Great Pyramid of Egypt is that it was intended to be used as an astronomical observatory as well as a tomb.

M. A. B.—Three-tenths of the earnings of a Belgian convict are given to him on the expiration of his term of imprisonment. Some of them thus save more money in jail than they have ever saved before.

L. G. asks if there are any plants or vegetable growths that emit light. ——It is difficult to determine with accuracy. Certain fungi shine with a brilliant phosphorescence, and some authorities on botany assert that various bright-coloured flowers like the marigold emit light towards evening. There is a difference of opinion about the latter point. One Swedish botanist says the light of the marigold is electrical; other botanists declare that it is an optical illusion.

Z.—The Sultan of Morocco keeps a large number of live lions about his premises, and in the evening these animals are let loose in the courtyards of the palace to act as guards to the royal harem.

G. N.—Nearly £300,000 worth of articles are pawned in London weekly.

P.—There are two violet farms in the United States, both managed entirely by women.

Dress.—The universal custom among women of dressing in expensive clothes, regardless of comfort, is due partly to the love of display, no doubt, but it is looked upon by men of science as a survival of olden times, when the woman was the property of the man, and her dress was used as a means of displaying his wealth. In the present day, they say, the Society dame clothes herself in accordance with the social standing of her husband; she must "maintain her position," and comfort, which is the real function of dress, takes a back seat. This is certainly very much like the usage of patriarchal times.

P.—In most of the countries of Europe there are more restrictions on the sale of "patent medicines" than in the United Kingdom, where, in fact, there is very little restraint. In Armenia no medicines prepared by an occult art can be legally sold.

Eat.—Larvae or catapillars eat more in one day in proportion to their size than any other creatures. Many caterpillars consume twice their own weight of food in twenty-four hours. The larva of the flesh-fly increases its weight two hundred times during the first twenty-hours of its existence.

Bell.—The bell bird is so called because its note is as loud and as clear as a bell. It is found in South America and Africa. An eminent naturalist has stated that it can be heard at a distance of three miles.

Shell.—Some authorities declare that explosive shells were first introduced as a factor in naval warfare in 1853, although their utility was recognised fifty years previously. This is in direct conflict with the record of the battle of Liman in 1788, when several Turkish battleships were destroyed by the shells fired from "big guns"—thirty-six and forty-eight pounders.

M.—When a criminal is arrested in Morocco he has to pay the cost of arresting him, if he possesses anything that can be realised. If not, he usually has a little added to his punishment.

G.—A neat brush is attached to the tail of the glow-worm for the purpose of keeping clean that part of the worm from which the light proceeds, and thus preserving the brightness of the light.

War.—A Polish statesman has estimated that the daily cost of a war in which the five Great Powers of Europe—Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria and Russia—were engaged, would be rather more than four millions sterling.

A. L.—The custom about which you ask prevails on the death of a prince of the royal family of Austria. His horse, covered with a black cloth, follows the funeral, limping painfully. The lameness is caused by driving a nail through one shoe, and is intended to typify the animal's sorrow.

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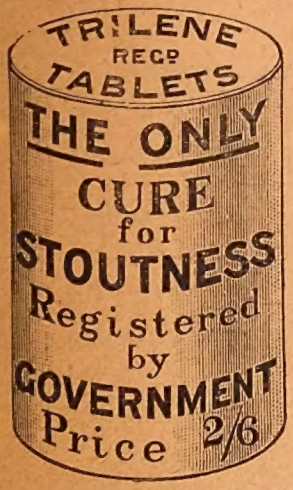
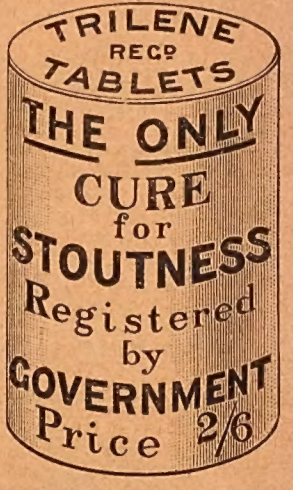
TRILENE TABLETS Regd



For a few weeks. They will safely REDUCE WEIGHT and CURE CORPULENCY PERMANENTLY, whether Abdominal or General. They are small, agreeable, harmless, sent privately, and never fail to Improve both HEALTH and FIGURE without change of Diet.

An English Countess writes: "Your Trilene Tablets act admirably."

Send **2s. 6d.** to THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66, Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.



SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"87 Alexandra Road, Norwich, October 19th, 1896.

"Gentlemen,—In reference to Trilene Tablets, I may say that my wife found the greatest possible benefit from the use of them; their action was rapid, and exceeded our utmost expectations, as they were also most beneficial to the respiratory organs. My wife was many years growing so stout, but although the disease was, I consider chronic, the Tablets soon reduced the same completely. You have our united thanks, and if I can do anything to promote your interests I will freely use my utmost endeavours to do so.

"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

MRS. DARNLEY SMITH, Landscove Vicarage, Ashburton, writes: "Trilene Tablets have reduced my weight very much. I am so much lighter in every way, and better in health."

COUNTESS SECKENDORFF, of Berlin, writes: "The Tablets greatly benefited me personally, and I am recommending them to friends."

MISS CHATTERTON, 7 Salisbury Villas, Banstead, Surrey, says: "I weighed 12st. 8lb., but am now 11st. and getting much better."

Nurse CROUCHER, at Mrs. Bennett's, 14 Buckleigh Road, Streatham, says: "I lost 9 lb. from the box I took."

"77 Hindhill Street, Heywood, February 5th, 1898.

"Gentlemen,—I have not quite finished the box of Tablets and am 21lb. lighter. The change is great, and several friends are beginning the treatment, which not only reduces fat but strengthens rheumatic joints—such has been the case with me. "Yours sincerely, M. A. HEYWOOD."

MRS. D. BURTON, of Silverleigh, Tunbridge, writes: "I am very pleased with difference in size, my friends all telling me how much thinner I am getting."

MISS NORTHLEDGE, The Laurels, Riseholme Road, Lincoln, says: "The Tablets reduced me 1st., so that I am cured."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.

MR. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17st., was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15st."

Extract from *The Lady*, September 3rd, 1896: "Many stout persons have suffered untold agonies in unavailing efforts to reduce their bulk, either by means of severe dieting, or by taking more or less deleterious drugs; but all these pains would have been saved if they had only invested in a box of the wonderful Trilene Tablets which are quite harmless, containing neither mercury, arsenic, nor any other mineral poison, and which are an unfailing cure for obesity."

FATHER T. M. BYRNE, of Holy Cross Abbey, Sligo, writes: "When I began our Tablets I was 12st. 5lb.; I now scale at 10st. 11lb.—my case, too, is hereditary."

MRS. T. BOSTON, Cambridge Villas, Clifford Street, South Wigston, says: "I congratulate you on your wonderful Tablets. My weight at first starting them was 11st. 7lb., and I now weigh 9st. 11lb."

MR. MCLEOD, 44, Calside, Paisley, writes: "I have been cured. If you want to know my weight now, it is 10st.; reduced 1st. 8lb., and I am quite content."

A. M. PRATT, of Ongar House, Ongar, says: "My weight is so much reduced it is unnecessary to take more. The reduction of weight was from 12st. 6lb. to 10st. 4lb."

MRS. WHITEHOUSE, of Poplar Avenue, Edgbaston, writes: "My husband is in splendid health, and has lost 15lb. in weight since taking the Tablets; I am sure I thank you on his account."

MRS. H. COX, 28 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The box of Tablets has reduced my weight 1½ stones."

MR. WALKER, 236 London Road, Hazelgrove, Stockport, says: "I have used one box and am 14lb. lighter. Send another soon as possible."

Col.-Sergt. WHITTLE, of East Lancashire Regt., Burnley, Lancs, says: "A man in our regiment in 1891 lost several stone from taking your Tablets."

Mr. BUTLER, Surgeon, M.R.C.V.S., of Hampton Manor, Evesham, says: "My patient has lost 1st. in weight whilst taking your Tablets."

MRS E. ALEXANDER, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They have reduced me quite 2 stone, and I am now quite cured."

Mrs. W. A. RADFORD, of High Street, New Brinsley, Eastwood, writes: "Before taking Tablets I was 46 inches round waist, now I am 32 inches. I hope soon to be 23. I could hardly move or get up, now I get about easily. Please use this as you wish."

Countess G. FURSTENBERG, of Stammheim, Germany, writes: "They act speedily and well."

The Princess LIECHTENSTEIN writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send me your excellent Tablets."

Mrs. WEAVER, of Greenpits Villa, Ross, Hereford, writes: "I am reduced from 13st. 8lb. to 11st. You may use this if you like."

MRS. CROSSLEY, of Rose Hill, Torver, nr. Coniston, says: "There is a very decided diminution of fat. I am delighted, and cannot speak too highly in praise of Tablets. My heart is better, and I can breathe so much easier. You may refer to me as often as you like."

Lady C. CONRAD writes from Wiesbaden: "I am very pleased with your Tablets."

Mrs. TAYLOR-ROBINSON, of Tweed Green House, Whalley Range, Manchester, says: "I feel so much lighter and better since taking your Tablets, and am so much thinner that I hardly recognise myself."

Miss A. LONG, of 9 South Parade, Waterford, writes: "Your Tablets have reduced me 14lb."

Miss A. DAWSON, 62 Orchard Street, Weston-super-Mare, says: "Glad to say the Tablets have sufficiently reduced me. I shall always recommend them."

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